

YEA and AMEN:
OR, 4378. a. 44
PRETIOUS
PROMISES,
AND
PRIVILEDGES.

Spiritually unfolded in their
Nature and Use.

Driving at the assurance and esta-
blishing of weak Believers.

Sibbs
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Reviewed by himselfe in his life time,
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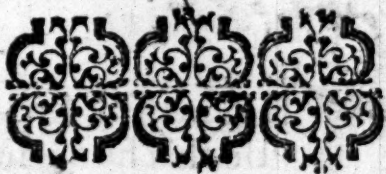
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YEA and AMEN.

O R,
PRETIOUS PROMISES,

Layd open out of
2 COR. I. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

*But as God is true, our
word towards you was
not yea and nay; for
the Sonne of God, Iesus
Christ, who was prea-
ched among you by us,
was not yea and nay;
but in him was yea.*

*For all the promises of God
are in him yea, and in
B him*

Pretious Promises.

*him Amen, unto the
glory of God by us.*

THE blessed Apo-
stle, that he might
have the better
place in the hearts of his
hearers, endeavours here
with all diligence to wipe
off any imputation, which
they might have against
him, that so his doctrine
might come home to their
soules, and have the freer
accesse to worke upon
their consciences.

We have therefore in
these words *S. Pauls* Apo-
logie, for not comming
unto the *Chorinthians* ac-
cording to his promise.
Wherein hee alledgeth
that it was not from any
inconstancy

inconstancy in *him*; but indeed from corruption in manners among *them*. verse 23. *I call God to record, that to spare you I came not.* The Apostle as a *man*, and as a *holy man*, might promise many things common to this life, and might lawfully vary afterwards, upon the appearance of real impediments.

But the things which he promiseth, and speakes of as an *Apostle*, they admit of no such uncertainty. Therefore his care is to decline all thoughts of wavering therein, and to maintaine the credit of the Gospell, which hee had taught to the utter-

most : knowing well, how ready *false teachers* would be to perswade the people, that *Paul* was as light in his preaching, as he was in keeping his word with them, therefore our *Word is true, as God is true*, saith he.

There is the same ground of the certainty of Evangelicall truths, as there is of God himselfe. *Iesus Christ* whom I preached among you was not *yea and nay*, saith the Apostle, but *yesterday and to day*, and the same *for ever*. Whence may bee observed :

Doct. 1.

That the object of preaching now in the time of the Gospell, is especially Iesus Christ.

Christ. This is the Rock upon which the Church is built. Christ should be the subject matter of our teaching, in his *Nature*, *Offices*, and *Benefits*, in the duties which we owe to him, and the instrument whereby we receive all from him, which is *faith*.

If wee preach the *Law*, and discover mens corruption, it is but to make way for the Gospels freer passage into their soules. And if we presse holy duties, it is to make you walke worthy of the Lord Jesus. All teaching is reductive to the Gospell of Christ, either to make way as *Iohn Baptist* did, to leuell all proud thoughts,

and make us stoop to him, or to make us walk worthy of the grace we receive from him.

The *Bread of life* must be broken, the *Sacrifice* must be anatomized and layed open; the riches of Christ, even his unsearchable riches, must be unfolded. *The Sonne of God* must be preached to all, and therefore God who hath appointed us to be saved by Christ, hath also ordained preaching, to lay open the Lord Iesus, with the heavenly treasures of his grace and glory. But to go forward.

*Iesus Christ who was
preached among you, by
me,*

*me, and Sylvanus, and
Tymotheus, was not yea
and nay.*

Here observe: That the
consent of Preachers in the
mysteries of salvation, is an
excellent meanes to streng-
then faith in their hearers:
not in regard of the truth
it selfe, but in regard of
men. So it pleaseth God
to condescend to our
weaknesse, in adding Sa-
craments and Oath unto
his promises, thereby to
shew the more stablenesse
of his counsell towards us.

By yea here is meant
Certaine, Constant, Unva-
riable. The times vary,
but not the faith of the
times. The same funda-

B 4 mentall

Observe.

mentall truth is in all ages. Sometimes indeed it is more explicated, and unfolded; as we have in the *New Testament* divers truths more cleerely revealed than in the *Old*. There is not a new *faith*, but a larger explication of the old *faith*. Divine truth is alwayes the same. If there hath beene a *Church* alwayes, there hath ever beene a Divine truth. Now it is an *Article* of our faith in all times to beleeeve a *Catholike Church*, certainly then there must bee a *Catholike truth*, to be the seed of this Church. Therefore we should search out, what was that *yea*, that positive Doctrine in those Apostolicall

Apostolicall times of the Churches purity before it was corrupted.

The Church was not long a Virgin, yet some there were that held the truth of Christ in all ages. Our present Church holds the same positive truths, with the Apostles before us. Therefore we say, *Our Church was before Luther*, because our *Doctrin* is Apostolicall, as also is our *Church* that is continued thereby, because it is built upon Apostolicall doctrine. Put the case we cannot shew the men as they ridiculously urge; what is that to the purpose? From an ignorance of particular

B 5 men

men, will they conclude us to be ignorant of the Church of Christ, which hath ever beene.

Hence the true Church may easily be discerned: the points of Religion wherein our adversaries differ from us, be but patcheries of their *owne*, they were not *yea*. In the *Apo-
stles times*, their *Purgato-
ry*, *Invocation of Saints*, and *Sacraments*, of divers kindes were devised by themselves afterwards. And indeed for a thousand yeeres after Christ, many of the differences betwixt us and the *Papists* were never heard of; neither were they ever established by any Counsell, till

till the *Counsell of Trent.*

Our positive points are grounded upon the holy *Scriptures*; we seek the *Old way*, and the best way, as *Jeremy* adviseth us. There was no popish trash in *Abrahams* time, among the blessed *Patriarches*, nor in *Christs* time. No, nor many hundred yeares after; they came in by little and little, by humane invention, for their owne advantage; a meere policy to get money and abuse the people. Indeed they hold many of our truths, but they adde something of their owne to them; they adde necessity of *tradition* to the *Scriptures*, merits to *faith*; they adde
Saints

Saints to Christ in Divine Worship: they have seven *Sacraments* to our *two*. They may safelier therefore come to us, than we to them; we hold all that they should hold, onely their owne additions wee hold not, we leave them to themselves. So much for that.

Doct.

To touch only another point, that borders a little upon it. *Divine truth is of an inflexible nature*; this crosseth another rule of theirs; for they hold, they may give what sense of *Scripture* they will: and that the current of the present *Church*, must judge of all former counsels. What? Doth the truth

truth vary according to mens judgements? must we bring the strait Rule to the crooked Timber for to be measured? Shall the judgement of any man, be the rule of Gods unerring truth? Shall present men interpret it thus, and say, it is so now? And shall others that succeed after say, what ever it was then, now it is thus: and must we beleve all? God forbid.

This declareth, *That no man can dispence with Gods Law*: this written Word is alike in all: truth is truth, and error error, whether men think it to be so or no. Reason is reason, in *Turkes*, as well as

Doct. 4.

as amongst us. The light of nature, is the light of nature, in any Countrey as well as here. Principles of nature vary not as Languages doe: they are inbred things. And if Principles of nature be inviolable, and indispenfable, much more is *Divinity*. Filth is filth wee all confesse: opinion ought not to bee the rule of things, but the nature of the thing it selfe.

Therefore what is against nature, none can dispence withall. God cannot deny himselfe. What is naught in one age, is naught in another, and for ever naught. There is no Monarch in the World
can

can dispence with the Law of nature, or with the Divine Law of God. For the opinion of any man in the World, is not the rule which hee may comfortably live by, but the undoubted light of Christs written Word.

I speake this the rather to crosse their base practises, who when God calls them to stand for his cause and truth, they will bend and bow the sacred truth, which is alwayes *Yes* and *Amen*, to their owne by ends and base respects. As if the opinion of any man in the world were the rule of their faith and obedience. This is to make God no God. Is not right, right?

right? Is not the Law the Law? Is not the Word of Christ a word that alters not, but remains stedfast to all eternity?

Assure your selves there is a truth of God, that we must maintaine to the death, not onely in opposing Heresie, but resisting of impiety wheresoever we meet it. *John Baptist* was a Martyr when hee stood out against *Herod* and said, *Thou must not have thy Brother Philips Wife*. He would not be meale-mouth'd in reproofing his sinne, but cried out against the unlawfulnessse of it, though it cost him his life. Men ought to suffer for the truth, and
not

not for base ends deny the least word of *God*, because it is a divine sparkle from himselfe.

*For all the promises of
God, in him are yea,
and in him are Amen.*

This comes in after this manner: the word that I preached (saith *Paul*) is unvariable, because Christ himselfe is alwayes *yea*, and I have preached nothing but Jesus Christ among you; my preaching then must needs be a certain and immutable truth.

There are divers readings of the words, but the most materiall is (as this Translation and the best Expositors have it)

All

All the promises of God in Christ are yea, (that is,) they are certaine and constant in him. And then they are Amen, that is, in Christ they are fulfilled. In him they are made, and in him they are accomplished. The whole carriage of the promises are in Christ: for his sake they were first given, and in him they shall be performed. As Christ himselfe was yesterday, and to day, and the same for ever: so are all Gods promises made in him, undoubtedly, eternally, and unchangeably true to all posterities.

Here are divers truths
which offer themselves to
our

our consideration. First take notice, that since the fall of man, it hath pleased our good God to establish a *Covenant of grace* in Jesus Christ, and to make him a second *Adam*, by whom we might be restored to a better estate, than ever wee had in the first *Adam*. In which happy condition there can be no intercourse betwixt God and man, without some promise in his Christ: so that God now deales all by promises with us. The reason is this, how can poore dust and ashes dare to challenge any thing of the great Majesty of Heaven, without a warrant from himselfe? How can
the

Conscience,
what.

Why God
rules his
Church
by promises.

the Conscience be satisfied? (*Conscience* you know is a knowledge together with God.) How can that rest quiet in any thing, but in what it is assured comes from God? And therefore for any good I hope for from God, it behooves me to have some promise, and word of his mouth for it, this being his constant course of dispensation to his people. *While we live in this world we are alwayes under hope.* We rejoyce in hope of the glory of God. Now hope looks still to the promise, whereof some part is unperformed.

How doth Heaven differ from Earth? but in this :

this: Heaven is a place all for performances: here we have some performances to encourage us, but are alwayes under some *promise* not yet accomplished. And therefore the manner of our apprehension of God in this world, exceedingly differs from that in Heaven.

Here it is by *faith* and *hope*, there it is by *vision*: vision is fit for performance. *Faith* and *Hope* looke alwayes to a word revealed: God therefore rules his Church in this manner for their greater good. Alas what can we have from God, but by the manifestation of hiis own good will? May we look
for

for favour from God for any thing in our selves? It is a fond conceit.

Reas. 2.

Againe, God will have his *Church* ruled by promises in all ages, to exercise the faithfull in *prayer* and *dependance* upon him. God will see of what credit is amongst men, whether they will rely upon his bare promise or no. He might doe us good, and give us no *promise*; but he will try his graces in us, by arming us against all difficulties and discouragements till the thing promised be performed to us. *Promises* are (as it were) the stay of the soule in an imperfect condition, and so is faith in them, untill
our

our hopes shall end in full possession : and wee must know, that *Divine Promises are better than earthly performances.* Let God give man never so much in the world, if hee have not a promise of better things, all will come to nothing at the last. And therefore God supports the spirits of his servants against all temptations, both on the right hand and on the left by sweet promises. Hee will have them live by *faith*, which alwayes hath relation to a *Promise*. This is a generall ground then, that God now in Christ Jesus hath appointed to governe his *Church* by way of promises. But

The excellencie
of Divine
Promises.

Definiti-
on of a
promise.

But what is a Promise?

A *Promise* is nothing but a manifestation of love; an intendment of bestowing some good, and removing some evill from us. A declaring of a mans free engagement in this kinde, is a *Promise*; it alwayes comes from *love* in the party promising, and conveighs goodnesse to the beleeving soule. Now what love can there be in God to us (since the *fall*,) which must not be ground-
ed on a better foundati-
on than our selves? If *God* love us, it must be in one that is, first beloved; here-
upon comes the ground of the promises to be in Je-
sus Christ: all intercourse
betweene

between God and us must be in *him* that is able to satisfie God for us. The Almighty Creator will have our debts discharged before he enters into a covenant of peace with us.

Now this Christ hath perfectly done, and thereby reconciled lost sinners; hereupon the promise immediately issues (from Gods love in Christ) to beleiving scules: *He* must *first* receive all good for us, and we must have it at the *second hand* from him. The promises in Christ are as the spirits in the body, they runne through al the ages of the Church; without him there is no mercy nor comfort to be
C had.

had. God cannot look on this cursed nature of ours out of Christ; and therefore whosoever apprehends any mercy from God, he must apprehend it in Christ the promised seed. To make it clearer; our nature since the *fall* is odious to God, (a sinfull cursed nature remaines in the best of us) and therefore that God may looke peaceably upon it, he must looke upon it in him that hath it undefiled, & in him whom he loves, even his only Son, like unto himselfe, that hath taken our nature upon him.

Now our nature in Christ must needs be lovely and acceptable; and if
ever

ever God love us, it is for Christ alone, who was predestinated before all worlds, to be a *Sacrifice* for us, to be the Head of his *Church*: he was ordained to doe us good, before we our selves were ordained. Christ is the first Beloved, and then we: God loves us in his beloved one: *This is my beloved Sonne in whom I am well pleased.* As if the Lord had said, I am pleased in him, and in all his, in his whole mysticall body. Christ is the Son of God by nature, we by *adoption*; what ever good is in us, is first & principally in him. God conveighs all by the naturall Son to the adop-

I Pet. I. 10

Mark I. 11

ted sonnes: therefore *all the promises are made to us in Christ*, he takes them from God for us. He himselfe is the first Promise, and all are *Tea and Amen* in him: they are not directed to us, abstracted from him; but we are elected in Christ, sanctified in *him*, acquitted frō sin through him: *by his stripes we are healed*. If Christ had not satisfied the wrath of *God*, by bearing our iniquities upon the crosse, wee had beene liable every moment to condemnation. If he had not been free from our sins, we had for ever lyen under the burthen of them. *You are yet in your sinnes* (saith Sain: Paul) if
Christ

Christ be not risen. We are freed from our debts, because Christ our surety is out of prison; he is in Heaven, and therefore we are at liberty.

I Cor. 15.
17.

The Promises are a deed of gift, which wee have from and by Christ, who is the first object of all the respect that God hath to us. Why are the Angels attendants on us? Because they attend upon *Jacobs Ladder*, (that is,) upon Christ, that knits Heaven and Earth together. So that the Angels because they attend upon Christ first, become likewise our attendants: we have a promise of *eternall life*: but this life is *in his Son*; God

C 3 blesteth

blesseth us with all spirituall blessings in *him*, and makes us sons in him the naturall Sonne : whatsoever prerogative we enjoy, it is in Christ first, and so belongs to us, but no further than we by *faith* are made one with him. How dardest thou think of *God* who is a *Consuming fire* ? and not think of him as he is pleased and pacified with thy person in Christ, who tooke thy nature upon him, to be a foundation of comfort, and a *second Adam* ; a publique person satisfying Divine Justice for all that are members of his body ?

Wee may think upon God with comfort, when
we

wee see him appeased in his Christ. As long as hee loves Christ, hee cannot but love us. Never think to have grace, or salvation, or any thing without Christ. Doth God love mee, doth hee doe good to my soule for my owne sake (abstracted from his Sonne?) no surely: then should I flie from his presence. But he looks upon me in his *beloved*, and in him accepts of my person, therefore our Saviour prayeth, *I desire thee blessed Father, that the love wherewith thou lovest mee, may be in them, and I in them.*

This should direct us in our dealing with God, not

to goe directly to him, but by a *Promise*, And when wee have a *Promise*, look to Christ in whom it is performed; If we ask any thing of God in *Christs name*, he will give it us; If wee thank God for any thing, thank him in Christ, that wee have it *in him*. What a comfort is this, that wee may goe to God in Christ, and claime the *Promises* boldly? because he loves us with the same love he beares to his only beloved Sonne. If we get fast hold on Christ, and cleave there, God can as soone alter his love to him, as alter his love to us; his love is every whit as unchangeable to a beleeving

leeving member, as to Christ the head of the body. The *Promises* are as sure as the *love of God in Christ is*, upon which they are founded, and from which *nothing can separate us*. For *Promises* being the fruit of Gods love, and Gods love being founded first upon Christ: it must needs follow, that all the *Promises* are both *made*, and *made good* to us through him.

If a Prince should love a man, and his love should be founded upon the love he beares to his own Son, surely such a one may have comfort, that love will never faile him: because it is an affection na-

C 5 : turall,

turall, and therefore unalterable, he will alwayes love his Sonne, and therefore will alwayes delight in him, in whom his Son delighteth. Now Christ is the everlasting Sonne of the Father; his deare and only Sonne, in whom hee is ever well pleased, and through whom he cannot be offended with those that are his. So surely as God loves Christ, so surely hee loves all that are united to him. There is nothing in the world can separate his love from his owne Sonne, neither is there any thing able to separate his love from us that are *one* with him. God loves Christs mysticall
call

Rom. 8.

call body, as well as his naturall body; hee hath advanced that to glory at his right hand in heaven, and will hee (think you) leave his mysticall body *the Church* in a state of abasement here on earth? No certainly: God loves every member of his Son; for as he gave *us* to Christ, so *Him* hath he sealed and annointed to be a Saviour for his people.

This is the reason why God looks upon us with a forbearing eye (notwithstanding the continuall matter of displeasure hee finds in us) hee looks on us in his *Sonne*, his love to us is grounded on his love to Christ. And
here-

hereupon comes our *boldnesse* with God the Father, that wee can goe to him in all distresses with comfort, & say, Lord look on thy Son whō thou hast given for us, and in him behold his poore members now before thee: In our selves we have *dread*, but in thy dearly beloved wee have joy in thy presence. If we come in the garments of our Elder brother, wee are sure to get a blessing, but in our selves God cannot endure to behold us: If we bring *Benjamin* to our Father; if wee carry Christ along with us, then come and welcome.

Upon what unchange-
able,

able grounds is the *love* of God, and the faith of a Christian builded? How can the gates of hell prevaile against the *faith* of a true beleever, when it is carried to the *promise*, and from the promise to Gods love? the love of God to Christ shall as soone faile, as the faith of a sincere Christian shal be shaken. The promises else should bee of no effect, they should be *Yes* and *Nay*, and not *Yea & Amen*.

If the promises could bee shaken, the love of God and Christ should be uncertain. Overturn heaven and earth, if we overturne the faith of a true persevering Christian.
There.

There is nothing in the world of that firmnesse as a beleeving soule is, the ground hee stands upon makes him unmoveable. Our union with the Lord Jesus makes us like *Mount Sinai*, that cannot be shaken. But wee must know there are three degrees or steps of love, whereof a promise is the last.

1. *Inward love.*
2. *Reall performance.*
3. *A manifestation of performance intended before it bee done.*

Love concealed doth not cōfort in the *interim*; therefore God who is *love*, doth not only affect us for the present, and intend us
mercy

mercy hereafter : but because hee will have us rest sweetly in his bosome, and settle our selves on his gracious purposes , hee gives us in the mean time many *rich and pretious promises*. Hee not only loves us , and shewes the same in deeds *now*, but he expresth his future care of us, that wee may build on him, as surely as if we had the thing performed already.

By this wee see how God loves us, he hath not only an inward liking and good wil to us in his brest, but manifests the same by *word*; hee reveales the tenderneffe of his bowells towards us, that wee may have

have the comfort of it before-hand: God would have us live by *faith*, and establish our selves in *hope*, because these graces fit us for the promise. If there were no *Promises*, there could bee no *faith* nor *hope*.

Faith and Hope
what they
are, and
of what
use.

H.b. II. I.

What is *Hope*, but the expectation of those things that the word saith? And what is *faith*, but a building on the promise of God? *Faith* looks to the word of the thing, *Hope* to the thing in the word. *Faith* looks to the thing promised, *Hope* to the possession and performance of it. *Faith is the evidence of good not seene*, (making that which is *absent* *sent*.)

sent as present to us) Hope waits for the accomplishment of that good contained in the word; if we had nothing promised, what need *hope*? and where were the foundation of *faith*? But God being willing to satisfie both, (that wee may bee heavenly-wise, in relying upon a firme foundation; and not as fooles, *trust in vanity*) In mercy gives us *promises*, and seales them with an oath for our greater supportment. That love which ingaged the Almighty to bind himself to us in *pretious promises*, will furnish us likewise with grace needfull, till wee be possessed of them.

He

He will give us leave to depend upon him, both for happinesse and all quieting graces which may support the soule till it come to its perfect rest in himselfe.

Now these gracious expressions of our good God may be reduced into divers rankes. I will but touch some few particulars, and shew how wee should carry our selves to make a comfortable use of them.

Division
of the
Promises.

First, there are some *universall Promises* for the good of all mankind, as that *God would never destroy the World againe, &c.*

Secondly, there are other Promises that more
particularly

I. Either of *outward things*.

2. Of spirituall and
eternall things { of Grace.
 and Glory.

In the manner of promising, they admit of this distinction. All the Promises of God are made to us, either

Absolutely, without any condition; so was the Promise of sending Christ into the world, and his glorious coming againe to judgement: let the world be as it will, yet Christ did come, and will come againe with thousands of Angels, to judge us at the last. Or

Or 2. *conditionall*. As the Promise of *Grace* and *Glory* to Gods children that he will forgive their sinnes, if they repent, &c. God deales with men (as wee doe by way of *commerce* one with another) propounding mercy by *covenant* and *condition*: yet his covenant of grace is alwayes a *gratious covenant*. For he not onely gives the good things, but helps us in performing the condition by his Spirit, he workes our hearts to beleeve and to *repent*.

Temporal
promises
condition-
nall.

Thus all Promises for *outward things* are *conditionall*: as thus, God hath promised protection from contagious *sicknesse*, and from

from *trouble* and *warre*,
that he will be *an hiding*
place, and a *Deliverer* of
his people in time of dan-
ger, that he will doe this
and that good for them.
But these are *conditionall*,
so far forth as in his wise
providence he sees they
may helpe to preserve spi-
ritual good things in them,
and advance the graces of
the inward man. For God
takes liberty in our out-
ward estate, to afflict us
or doe us good, as may
best further our soules
welfare. Because do what
we can with these bodies,
they will turn to dust and
vanity ere long. We must
leave the world behinde
us; therefore he lookes to

CUR

our main estate in Christ, to the new creature; and so farre as outward blessings may cherish and increase that, so farre hee grants them, or else he denies them to his dearest ones.

For we cannot still enjoy the blessings of this life, but our corrupt nature is such, that (except we have somewhat to season the same) we shall surfer, and not digest them; therefore they are all given with exception of the *Crosse*, as Christ saith, hee that doth for him any thing, *shall have a hundred fold here*, but with *Persecution*, be sure of *that*, whatsoever else he hath: let
Christians

Mark 10.
20.

Christians looke for crosses, to season those good things they enjoy in this life.

To come now to some use of the point. Are all the Promises of what kind soever, whether *spirituall* and *outward*, *temporall* or *eterna*l, are they all made to us in Jesus Christ? And are they certainly true, *Yea* and *Amen* in him? Then I beseech you get into Christ betimes, strengthen your intrest in him by all meanes, out of whom we have nothing that is savingly good: rest not in any thing abstracted from him, so as to be accepted with God.

But you will say, doth
not

Use.

Object.

not God doe many good things to them that are out of Christ? doth not the Sonne shine, and the raine fall, upon the just and the unjust, upon the evill, as well as the good? doth he not cloath, and feed, and protect wicked men daily?

Ans^w.

He doth indeed, it cannot bee denied; but are they blessings? are these favours to them? No, but as God saith by Moses, if thou sin against me, *Cursed shalt thou be in thy Basket, and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy Land, the increase of thy Kine, and the flocks of thy Sheep: cursed at home, cursed abroad: they*

*Deut. 28.
16.*

they are cursed in their very blessings. A gracelesse brutish person, though hee swim with worldly pleasures, and have never such renews, and commings in to maintaine his bravery, is yet an accursed creature in the midst of all. For what are we made for, think you? To live here only? Oh no: then we were of all others the most miserable: there is an eternity of time a coming, wherein (after a few dayes spent in the flesh) we shall live either in perpetuall blisse, or unspeakable torment. The very best things beneath have a snare in them, they rather

D hinder

hinder, than further our eternall welfare.

Quest.

How doth that appeare?

Ans.

Because for the most part they make men secure and carelesse in the worship of God, so as to despise the power of godlinesse, and follow iniquity with greedinesse; wee may see by mens conversations that outward things are snares to them. They are not Promises in Christ for then they would come out of Gods love only, which alone makes mercies to be *mercies indeed* to us, and without which, the best of blessings will prove but a curse in the end.

If I have any thing in this world (any deliverance from evill, or any positive good thing) I may know it is for my benefit, when my heart is made more spirituall thereby, so as to value grace & holinesse at the highest rate, I esteeming my being in Christ above all transitory things whatsoever; above *riches* and *honour*, and the favour of great persons, which at the best is fading. Our intrest in him will stand by us, when all these things are withered and shrunk to nothing, Christ is a Fountaine never drawne dry, his comforts are permanent: the good in the crea-

ture soone vanisbeth, and leaveth the soule empty; therefore get into Christ speedily, it concernes thee neerely.

How to
get in
Christ.

For this purpose *attend upon the meanes of salvation*, and beg of God that he would make his owne ordinances (by his Spirit accompanying the same) effectuall to thy soule, that he would open the excellencies of Christ to thee, and draw thy affections to close with him.

Quest.

Answ.

Iohn 17.3

How are we in Christ? When by knowing of him, our knowledge carries our hearts unto him; when our wils cleave to that which we know to be excellent and necessary for

for us: when I firmly adhere to Christ, as the only good for me, then I love him, then I rest on him, then I have peace in him.

I may discern that I am in Christ, if upon my knowledge of him, my heart is united to him, and I find peace of conscience in him. *Faith* hath a quieting and establishing power. If I be in Christ, my soule will be cheered and satisfied with him alone. I know *all is Yea* and *Amen* in him, therefore my soule rests securely here. How ever our outward condition bee various and perplexed, yet our estate in Christ is firme and constant.

D 3 What

Quest.

What is a man out of Christ?

Answ.

As a man in a storme that hath no clothes to hide his nakednesse, or to shelter his body from the violence of the weather. As one in a tempest, that hath not house nor harbour to cover him. As a stone out of the foundation, set light by, and scattered up and downe here and there. As a branch out of the root; what sap is there in such a thing? it being good for nothing but to be cast into the fire.

A man that is not built up in Christ, planted in him, nor clothed with him, is the most destitute, despicable creature in all
the

the world; and if we look with a single eye, we shall so discern him : such a mans case is deeply to be bewailed : had wee but hearts to judge righteously, we would preferre the meanest condition of *Gods* childe, before the greatest estate of any earthly Monarch, be their flourishing felicity never so resplendant. Oh the miserable and wofull plight that all prophane wretches are in, who neglect grace and the mysteries of Christ to gratifie their base lusts : such an one, there is but a step betweene him and Hell, he hath no portion in the Lord Jesus. *I account all dung and drosse*

Phil. 3. 8.

D 4

(saith

Phil. 3. 8.

(saith S^t Paul) in comparison of Christ to be found in him, not having on mine owne righteousness. Happy is that man at the day of judgement, who thus appears.

The stability of a Christian having promises.

Againe, if so be that all promises are *Yea*, and *Amen* in Christ, then here take notice of the stability of a Christian, that hath promises to uphold him. Compare him with a man that hath present things only, with an *Esau* that abounds with worldly goods, and how great is the difference? God gives them their portion *here* as he saith to *Dives*, thou hadst thy good things, that thou chiefly caredst for, thou hadst

hadst them *here*, but *Lazarus* had paine, misery, and poverty: Now therefore the case is altered, he is advanced, and *thou art tormented*.

A beleeving Christian enjoys the sweetnesse of many *promises* in this life (for God is still delivering, comforting, and perfecting of him; renewing of his spirit, and supplying him with inward peace) but the greatest part is yet to be accomplished; perfection of grace and glory is to come, he is a Child, he is a Sonne, the promise *here* is his chiefe estate.

Another man hath present payment, and that is all he cares for, hee hath

D s some-

something in hand, and
swells with a conceit of
happineſſe thereby; Alas,
what are we the better to
have a great deale of no-
thing? *Solomon* that had
tryed all the world, re-
solves it to *vanity and*
vexation of spirit. All
things below are uncer-
taine, and wee are uncer-
taine in the use of them;
if we have no better a life
than a natural one, eternal
joy appertaines not to us.
Take a Christian and strip
him in your thoughts, frō
all the good things in the
world, he is yet a happier
man than the greatest
worldly favourite out of
Christ, for the one hath
nothing but present
things,

things, with a great deale
of addition of miserie,
which his ease and con-
tentment, makes him
more sensible of, as being
more tender and appreh-
ensive of an evill than
other men. The other
though hee want many
comforts of this life, and
enjoyes not present per-
formances, yet hee is rich
in bills and bonds, God is
bound to him who hath
promised hee will never
forsake him, but be *his por-
tion for ever*. Hee hath a
title to every commu-
nicable good, *Godlinesse
hath the promise of this
life, and that which is to
come*. A happy man; what
ever is most usefull for his
safe

Heb. 13. 5.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

safe conduct to heaven, he is sure to have it ; He that will give us a Kingdome, will not denie us daily bread ; hee that hath prepared a Country for us, will certainly preserve us safe, till we come there.

Besides that wee have here in performance, wee have many excellent *promises* of a greater good in expectation, which in Christ are all *Yea & Amen*. They are certaine, though our *life* be uncertaine, and the comforts of our life (lesse then life it selfe) mutable and perishing ; If life the foundation of outward comforts bee but a vapour, what are all the comforts themselves think you ? It

It is a Christians rejoycing in the midst of all changes beneath, that hee hath promises invested into him from above, that are lodged in his heart, and made his owne by *faith*, which have a wondrous peculiarizing vertue, to make that a mans *owne*, that is otherwise generally propounded in the Gospel; A Christian, take him at all uncertainties, he hath somewhat to build on, that is *Yea* and *Amen*, undoubtedly sure that wil stick by him.

I speak this to commend the estate of a beleeving Christian, to make you in love with it, seeing in all the changes and varieties
of

Pfal. 88. 4.

of this world, hee hath somewhat to take to. In all the dangers of this life, he hath a *Rock*, and chamber of *Providence* to goe unto, as it is *Esay* 26. God hath secret roomes to hide his children in, in times of publike disturbance, when there is a confusion of all things. God hath a safe abiding place for thee: *I have many troubles* (saith *David*) *but God is my defence continually*. Hee is my *shield* and *strong Tower*, whatsoever I want, I have it in him. What a comfort is this?

A Christian knowes either hee shall be safe here or in heaven, and therefore rests securely. *He that dwells*

Pfal. 91.

dwells in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (that is) in the love and protection of God above; As Moses saith, *Lord thou hast bin our habitation from everlasting to everlasting* (that is) thou art our sure help in the greatest extremity that can befall us in any age of the world.

Therefore build on his *promise*: for *God* and his *Word* are all one. If wee have nothing to take to when troubles come, woe unto us: In our selves considered, wee are even as grasse, and as a tale that is told, soone vanishing. But our estate in God is durable;

Psal. 112. 7

nable ; wee have here no
continuing Citie, sicknesse
may come, and death may
environ us the next mo-
ment, happy are they that
have God for their habi-
tation, wee dwell in him,
when we are dead ; when
we leave this world, wee
shall live with God for
ever : *The righteous is not
troubled for evill tydings,*
hee is not shaken from his
Rock and stay, he feares no
danger, because *his heart
is fixed.*

What a blessed estate is
it to be in Christ ? to have
promises in *him* to be pro-
tected, and preserved, not
onely whilest wee are in
this vale of teares, but
when this earthly taber-
nacle

nacle shall bee dissolved,
even to all eternity. If our
hearts be fixed on God, let
us heare evill tydings of
Warre, or Famine, or Pe-
stilence, let it be what it
will, blessed men are wee.

Every word of God is tryed Psal. 12.
as silver in the fire (saith the
Psalmist) the promises are
tried promises; wee may
safely rest upon them: But
if we have nothing to take
to when troubles arise, we
are as a naked man in a
storme without any shel-
ter, incompassed round
with distresse and misery.

The promises are our
inheritance, yea our best
inheritance in this life;
though the Lord should
strip us naked, and take
away

Ps. l. 119.

away all things else, yet if the promises remain ours, wee are rich men ; and may say with the Psalmist, *My lot is fallen into a good ground, thy testimonies are better unto me, than thousands of gold and silver.* For the promises are as so many obligations, whereby God is bound to his poore creature; And if wretched men think themselves as rich as they have bonds (though they have never a peny in their purses) much more may a true Christian, who hath the promises of Christ for his security, esteeme himselfe a wealthy person, as having many bonds whereby (not man but) God is enga-

engaged to him, & that not only for temporall good things, but for heavenly favours and spirituall blessings, for all which hee may sue God at his pleasure, and desire him to make good his word of truth.

There is little difference betwixt a poore Christian, and him that abounds in this worlds riches, onely this, the one hath wealth in his owne possession, the other hath it in Gods bond, the one hath it in hand, the other in trust. As for the worldling, he hath but a *cisterne* when he hath most, whereas every faithfull soule hath the *spring head*, even
God

God himselfe to flye unto in all distresses, who will never faile him, but be a *Sunne* and a *Shield*, to defend us from all evill, and preserve us in all goodnesse all our dayes. But I go on.

Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath also anointed us, is God.

Obser. I.
A Christian needs
stablishing
grace.

Here observe, *That the Christian needs not onely converting but establishing grace*: he that hath begun any good worke in us must perfect it: the God of strength must give us his promise to support our weaknesse, without which we cannot stand.

Peter

Peter was in the state of grace, and yet when God did not stablilh him, wee see how he fell. The weakest beleever with the establisht grace of God will stand: and the strongest Christian, without Divine assistance, wil sink and fall away.

Whence this may bee further considered, *That the life of a Christian is a perpetuall dependant life:* he not only lives by faith in his first conversion, but ever after: hee depends upon God for protection and strength throughout his whole course. *God doth establisht us in Christ;* the ignorance of this makes men subject to back-

Obser. 2.
The life of a Christian full of dependancy.

backsliding For when we trust to grace received, and seek not for new supply, we are straight of *Peters* condition, *Though all forsake thee, yet will not I*, which occasioned his shamefull fall; he had too much confidence in grace received.

God is therefore faine to humble his children to teach them dependance. And usually, where any speciall grace is bestowed upon sinners, God joynes something therewith to put them in minde that they do not stand by their own strength. *Peter* makes a glorious confession, *Thou art Christ the Sonne of the living God*; and Christ honoured

Mat. 16.
17, 18, 19.

noured him exceedingly,
 saying, *Vpon this Rock will
 I build my Church*: but yet
 by and by, we see he calls
 him, *Satan, get thee behind
 me*; to teach us that wee
 stand not by our owne
 power: when wee are
 strong it is of God, and
 when we are weake, it is
 of our selves. *Iacob* Wrest
 led with the Almighty,
 and was a prevailer, but
 he was faine to *halt* for it,
 though he had the victo-
 ry, and overcame at last,
 yet he was stricken with
 lamenesse all his dayes.
 God did this to mind him,
 that he had that strength
 whereby he prevailed out
 of himselfe.

A Christian then should
 see

vse.

1 Sam. 2.

9.

Prov. 3.

set upon nothing in his owne strength : *Hannah* saith comfortably, *No man shall bee strong in his owne might*, God is all our sufficiency : man naturally affects a kinde of *divinity*, and will set upon things in confidence of his owne abilities, without prayer and seeking of Gods help; hee thinkes to compasse great matters, and bring things to a good issue by his owne wit and discretion. Oh delude not your selves, this cannot be. *Acknowledge God in all thy wayes, and hee shall direct thy paths* : seeke unto the Lord in every enterprize thou goest about; acknowledge him in the beginning

ginning, progresse, and issue of all thy employments: what doe we but make our selves gods, when wee set upon businesse without invocation and dependance? A Christian is wondrous weake, even *vanity* of himselfe; but take him as he is built upon the *Promises*, and as he is in God, and then he is a kind of almighty person; *he can doe all things through Christ that strengthens him.* A Christian is in sort omnipotent, whilst hee commits his wayes to God, and depends upon the *Promise*; otherwise he is weaknesse it selfe, the most impotent creature in the World.

E Let

Psal. 115.

Let God therefore have
 all the glory of our establi-
 shing, and depend on him
 by prayer for the same. As
 all comes of his meere
 grace, so let all returne to
 his meere glory; *Not to our*
Lord, not to us, but to thy
Name he given the praise; it
 is the song of the Church
 militant on *Earth*, and it
 is the song of the Church
 triumphant in Heaven;
 that all glory is to God in
 the whole carriage of our
 salvation. The Promises
 are in *him*; hee only made
 the covenant, and he must
 performe it to us: with-
 out him we can doe no-
 thing, labour therefore to
 be wise in his wisdom,
 strong in his strength, to
 be

be all in all in Christ Jesus.

How shall wee know that a man hath establishing grace?

Object.

His assurance is firme, when his temptations are great, and his strength to resist, little, and yet notwithstanding he prevailes over them: Sathan is strong and subtile, now if we can stand against his snares, it is a cleere evidence of greater strength than is in our selves. In great afflictions, when God seemes an enemy, and clouds appeare betweene him and us, if then a mans *faith* can break through all, and in the midst of darknesse see God shining

Ans.

How to discern establishing grace.

in Christ upon him, and resolve, *Though thou kill me, yet I will trust in thee;* here is a strong establishing.

In the times of martyrdom, there was fire and faggot, and the frownes of bloody men; but who were the persons suffering? Even many Children, Old men, and Women, the weakest of creatures: notwithstanding the Spirit of God was so strong in these feeble ones, as their lives were not pretious to them; but the torments and threatenings of their cruell Persecutors were cheerfully undergone by them, as *Heb. 11.* Here was Gods power

power in mans infirmity.
If we have not something
above nature, how is it
possible wee should hold
out in great trials?

*Meanes to obtaine stabli-
shing grace.*

By what meanes may a
Christian obtaine this sta-
blishing grace.

First, labour for funda-
mentall graces: if the root
be strengthened, the Tree
will stand fast. *Humiliati-
on* is a speciall radical
grace; the foundation of
Religion is very low; a-
basement of spirit is in all
the parts of holinesse: eve-
ry grace hath a mixture of
humility, because they are
all dependances on God.

Helpes to
obtaine
confir-
ming
grace.

I.

E 3 Humility

Humility is an emptying grace, and acknowledgeth that in our selves there is nothing. If God withhold his influence, I am gone; if he withdraw his grace, I shall be like another man, as *Sampson* was when his haire was cut off. Selfe-emptinesse prepares for spirituall fulnesse: *When I am weak* (saith blessed *Paul*) *then I am strong*; that is, when I feele and acknowledge my weaknesse, then my strength encreases; otherwise a man is not strong when he is weake, but when he is sensible and groanes under the burthen of his infirmities, then is he inwardly strong.

Another

Another fundamentall grace, is *dependance* upon God; for considering our owne insufficiency, and that *faith* is a grace that goes out of our selves, and layes hold of the righteousness of another to justify us, nothing can be more necessary to quiet the soule: *Believe and you shall be established*: as the Promises are sure in themselves, so should we repose firme confidence in them.

But how doth God establish us by faith?

By working sound knowledge in us; *This is life eternall to know thee, Iohn 17.* When we know the truth of Gods word aright, we have a firme

E 4 ground

Object.

Ans.

Psal. 9. 10.

ground to depend on: for the more a man knowes God in Covenant, the more hee knowes Christ and the promises, the more he will trust and rely upon them. *They that know thy name will trust in thee,* saith the Prophet. Therefore labour for certainty of *knowledge*, that thou maist have a certainty of *faith*: What is the reason our faith is weak? Because wee are carelesse to increase in knowledge. The more wee know of God, the more we shall trust in him. The more we know of a man that he is able and just of his word, the more safely we put confidence in him. So the more our security

Security is in Gods promises, as his bonds encrease, so our trust will be strengthened.

Thirdly, if thou wouldst have stablishing grace, beg it earnestly of God. Our strength in him is altogether by prayer, bind him therefore with his owne promise; beseech him to do unto thee according to his good Word, he is the God of strength, desire of him the spirit of strength; alledg to him thy own weaknesse and inability without him, & that if he helps not, thou shalt soone be overcome: lay open thy wants in Gods presence, shew him how unable thou art of thy selfe, to

Es. with-

3
Sue the
Promises
in Prayer.

withstand temptations, to beare crosses, to performe duties, to doe or suffer any thing aright, turne his gracious promises into prayers, desire God that hee would stablish thee by his grace, that he would prop and uphold thy soule in all extremities.

Quest.

What is the reason that Christians are so daunted and flie off in time of danger?

Answr.

Why troubles are so irksome.

They have no faith in the promise. The righteous is as *Mount Sina* that shall not be moved, hee builds on a foundation that can never be shaken, for the heart is never drawne to any sinfull vanity, or frightened with any
ter-

terroure of trouble, till
faith lets goe its hold, out
of God, there is nothing
for the soule safely to stay
it selfe upon.

No marvell to see men
fall that rest on a broken
Reed: Alas! whatsoever
is besides God, is but a
creature, and can the crea-
ture be other than change-
able? The comfort that
we have in God never fa-
deth, it is an abiding last-
ing comfort, such as con-
tents the soule, and satisfi-
es all the wants and de-
sires of it, which things be-
neath can never accomplish.

Wee see that the hea-
vens continue, and the
earth (without any other
foundation) hangs in the
midst

midst of the world by the bare word of the Almighty, therefore well may the soule stay it selfe on *that*, when it hath nothing else in sight to rely upon.

In this case Christians should look, 1. That their *principles* and foundations be *good*: And secondly, *builded strongly* upon them, for the soule is as that which it relies on; if upon empty things, it selfe becomes poore and empty; which the Devil knowing, strives to unloose our hearts from our Maker, and draw us to rely upon false objects. Hee sees full well, that whilest our soules cleave close to God, there is no prevailing

ling against us by any malice, or subtilty of men or devils. The Saints in *him*, are bold, and undaunted in the midst of troubles and torments; Indeed the sweetest cōmunion with God is, when we are beaten off from other helps; Though misery upon misery encounters us below, yet there is still succour issuing from above to a believing soule; If God hath it in heaven, *faith* will fetch it downe, and enjoy the sweetnesse of it here. That man can never doe amisse, that hath his dependencie upon the Almighty, there being no communion like that of a faithfull heart with the Lord, It

It is the office of *faith* to quiet our soules in all distresses, for it relies upon God for heaven it self, and all necessary provisi- on, till we come thither; strengthen *faith* therefore and you strengthen all; what can daunt that soul, which in the sorest affli- ction hath the great God for his friend? Such a spi- rit dares bid defiance to all the powers of darknes: Sathan may for a time ex- ercise, but hee can never wholly depresse a graci- ous heart. True belee- vers can triumph over that which others are slaves unto; they can set upon spirituall conflicts, and endure fiery tryalls, which

which others tremble to think of ; they can put off themselves, and be content to be nothing , so their God may appeare the greater, and dare undertake or undergoe any thing for the glory of their Maker ; considering they are not their owne, but have given up themselves unto Christ , they count not their lives , or any thing that is theirs deare for him.

Hee that stablisheth us with you, is God, who hath annointed us, &c.

Messias signifies annointed; our nature is enriched in Christ with all graces. Hee is annointed with the oyle

oyle of gladnesse above his fellowes, for us, that wee might have a spring of grace in our owne nature, that God and Christ being one, and we being in the Lord Jesus, might have all our anointing of the first annointed, for of his fulnesse we receive grace for grace.

Quest.

What are those graces which wee receive from Christs fulnesse?

Answ.

First, the grace of favour and acceptance, for the same love that God beares to Christ, he beares to all his, though not in so high a degree.

2

Secondly, the Grace of sanctification answerable to the grace of sanctification.

tion in him; every renewed work in us comes from Christ.

Thirdly, the rich privileges and prerogatives, that issue to persons sanctified; wee have dignity for dignity, favour for favour, gracious qualifications for gracious qualifications in Christ. God anoints us all in his Sonne, As the *oyntment* that was powred upon *Aaron*, ran downe to *the skirts of his garment*; so the weakest Christian is stablished with grace by Christ, grace runnes from the *Head* to poorest member, *the hem of the garment*; every one that doth but touch Christ, drawes vertue and strength

strength from him.

Quest.

Why is it called here an *annointing*?

Answ.

Because as the *Holy annointing*, *Exod.* 30. was not to be applied to prophane uses, so neither are the graces of the spirit, God being the Author of them, to be slighted and undervalued by the Professors of them.

Quest.

What are the vertues of this *oyntment*?

Answ.

First, it hath a cherishing power, it revives the drooping soule, and cheares a fainting spirit, when men are ready to sink under the burthen of their sins: this easeth them.

2. Annointing hath a strengthening power, it makes our limbs vigorous,
so

so doth grace fortifie the soule, nothing more. Our life is a combating life with Sathan, and temptations of all sorts, therefore wee need continuall *annointing* to make us nimble, and active in resisting our enemy; Oyle hath a suppling quality, so the Spirit of God makes pliable the joynts of the soule, it supports us with hidden strength, and enables us to encounter great oppositions, & to be victorious through Christ overall.

Grace is little in quantity, but it is mighty in operation, it carries the soule through difficulties, nothing can stand in the way

way of a gracious man, no not the *Gates of Hell*. The spirit of grace that is in a Christian, is stronger than he that is in the world, *A graine of Mustard seed*, the very least measure of true Holinesse, is stronger than the greatest measure of opposition. A Christians strength lies out of himselfe: he never overcomes by his owne power, hee can doe all things through *Christ* assisting him, otherwise hee is a most impotent creature, unable to doe or suffer any thing, ready to give over at the least trouble, and sink under every pressure of affliction.

Againe, *ointment* doth
excee-

exceedingly delight and refresh our spirits; as wee see the *Box* in the Gospel, when it was opened, the whole House smelt of it. So grace is a wondrous sweet thing. Before wee are anointed with the Spirit of Christ, with stablishing grace, what are we but a company of nasty abominable persons in the eyes of God? All things are accursed to us, and we are accursed in what ever we doe. God cannot look on us but as loathsome creatures, as the Prophet saith, *I would not so much as looke on thee, if it were not for Iehoshaphat's sake.*

That which makes a man, sweet is *grace*; this makes

makes our nature that is noisome and offensive in the nostrils of the Almighty, in it selfe, to become pleasant and amiable. A wicked man is a vile man, an ulcerous deformed creature: grace is of a healing nature wheresoever it is: this cures our spiritual distempers, beautifying the inner man, and making the whole frame of a Christians carriage, sweet and delectable.

I First to *God*, who loves the sent of his own grace wheresoever he finds it.

2 Secondly to *Angels*; the conversion of sinners rejoyceth them, when our custody is committed to their charge, how are they delighted

delighted with the beauty
of holinesse shining in us ?
The graces of God in his
Saints are a Feast to them:
the very name of a godly
and gracious man, is as
a sweet ointment every
where.

Holy men when they
are read of in Stories,
what a favour doe they
cast in the *Church*: so far
as a Christian is a New
Creature it makes him in
love with himselfe, scor-
ning to be so undervalued
as to defile himselfe with
base services: so farre as a
man is gracious, he gives
himselfe to honourable
employments; being a ves-
sell of grace he improves
his abilities to glorious
uses,

3

uses, esteeming things below too *meane for him.*

Grace is a wondrous pleasant thing, offensive to none, but to wicked men, that have no favour of God or goodnesse, it sweetens the soule, makes it delectable for Christ & his holy Spirit to lodge in, as in a *Garden of spices.* A gracious man that hath subdued his corruptions, is wondrous amiable both to himselfe, and to the Communion of Saints; his heart is as fine silver, every thing is sweet that comes from him: grace is full of comfort to a mans own conscience, the sense of which enlargeth the soule to all holy services.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, an ointment hath another property, it consecrates persons to holy uses? Anointed persons are raised above the ordinary ranke. The graces of Gods spirit elevate men above the condition of others with whom they live. Anointed persons are sacred persons, they are inviolable. *Touch not mine anointed, and doe my Prophets no harme:* we wrong the apple of Gods eye, we offer indignity to Christ himfelfe, if we hurt these. Indeed nothing can hurt them, but God by his over ruling power turnes all for their good.

Lastly, an ointment is a royall liquor, it will bee

F above

Psal. 105.
15

above all; so the graces of Gods Spirit where they are, will be uppermost, they will guide and governe all. As if a man have excellent parts, grace will rule these, and make them serviceable to Christ, his truth and members. If we have weaknesse and corruption, grace will subdue it by little and little, and never leave conflicting till it hath got the victory.

What are our souls without Gods anointing? Dead stinking, offensive to God, to good men, and to our selves: we cannot see with peace the visage of our owne soules: who can reflect seriously into his heart and life without horror

horror, that hath no grace?
 A man that sees his conscience awakened without this *anointing*, what is he? surely as the body without the soule: it is not all the excellencies of the soule laid upon a dead body, or all the goodly ornaments that bedeckt it, can keep it from stinking and being a loathsome object, because it wants the soule to quicken and enliven it to good employments: of it selfe it is but a peece of earth: all the vigor and life that the body hath, is communicated from the soule, they are beholding to our soules for many things. Put the richest ornaments what so-

ever upon the body, and not the Spirit of grace upon the soule (to cherish and refresh the same that it may appeare lovely in Gods sight) all is to no purpose.

Likewise this *anointing* hath relation to the persons anointed, *Kings, Priests, and Prophets.* Christ is primarily anointed, and all our grace is derived from him; hee teacheth us divine things by a Divine light. The poorest Christian in the world (whose heart is right with God) sees good things with such convincing love, that he imbraces them, and ill things with such a convincing hatred,

tred, that he abhors them.
 A man that lives without
 God in the world, may
talke, but he cannot *doe*;
 he may speak of death, but
 he dares not die, he trem-
 bles to thinke of the last
 tribunall, and of resigning
 his soule into the hands of
 his Maker: such an one
 may discourse of *suffring*,
 but when it comes to the
 point, his heart failes him:
 oh how he shrinkes when
 danger approacheth, what
 indirect courses will hee
 take to save his skin? how
 hardly is corrupt selfe
 brought under? how hea-
 vily doe men come off in
 this point, of doing and
 suffering for Christ, laying
 downe all at his feet, and

resolving to be disposed of at his pleasure in every thing? Men speak much of patience, and self-deniall, but they do not practise them, these vertues shine not forth in their conversation, which is the shame of Religion: only a true Christian hath the right knowledge of the doing of things, and is able to speak a word *in due season*, to reprove, to admonish, to comfort every member in the communion of Saints, hath some qualification for the good of the whole body.

A faithfull man is likewise spiritually anointed a *Priest*, to stand before God Almighty, he poures out his

his soul for himself & for others, having Gods care open at all times to his suits Every sincere Christian is a favourite in heaven, he hath much credit there which hee improves for the welfare of the Church here below. And hee keeps himselfe as a *Priest* unspotted of the world : a true Christian is taught of God, and knowes the meaning of that Law of his which prohibiteth *Priests* so much as to touch defiled things ; therefore he studies innocency, he runs not after the course of the multitude, neither is carried away with the streames of the times : he will not converse famili-

arly with those that may
staine him, (but so farre
as his calling leads him)
lest he should therby con-
tamine his spirit. A Chri-
stian *Priest* hath his heart
alwayes to the *Holy of Ho-
lies*, that so he may offer
up thanks and praise to
God, and offer up himselve
a sacrifice to him; his en-
deavour is to kill and slay
those *beasts* (those lusts)
that lurk in his heart, con-
trary to the Almighty.

Lastly, he that is anoin-
ted by the Spirit, is a *King*,
in regard of his great pos-
sessions, for *all* are ours,
things present, and *things*
to come, *life* and *death*, *pro-*
sperity, and *adversity*, all
help us to Heaven. Evill
things

things are ours in advantage and *successe*, though in *disposition* they be not ours, but have a hostile disposition in the. God overpowers the evil of things, and gives a Christian a living principle of grace, to suck sweet out of sowre, & draw good out of evill. What a King is this, that even the most terrible things are at his command and work for the best unto him? He conquers and brings under his greatest enemies, and feares neither death or judgement, nor the vengeance to come, knowing God in Christ to bee his reconciled Father, he rests assured, all things else will be
F s will

will be at peace with him. Others have Kingdomes out of themselves, but in themselves they are slaves, Every lust leads them away Captive: A Christian is such a King, as hath a Kingdome within himselfe, hee hath peace, and joy, and rest from base allurements, and terrours of conscience, hee walks by rule, and therefore knowes how to governe all? the glory of his Maker is the chiefe thing hee eyes, and to that hee referres every action.

*Who hath annointed us,
and sealed us.*

*Annointing and sealing
goe together, the same
God*

God *annoints* us, doth also *seale* us. *Both* are to secure us of our happy condition. Now Christ is the first sealed, *Iohn 6. Him hath God the Father sealed:* God hath set Christ a part from others, hath distinguished him, and set a stamp upon him to be the *Messiah*, by the graces of the spirit, whereof he was richly beautified; and by many miracles, whereby he shewed that he was the Sonne of God; by his resurrection from the dead: by his calling of the *Gentiles*, and many other things.

Christ being *sealed* himselfe, he sealed all that he did for our *Redemption* with

The Spi-
rits sea-
ling.

with his *bloud*, and hath added for the strengthening of our *faith*, outward seales, the *Sacraments* to secure his love more firmly to us.

But in this place another manner of sealing is to be understood. For here is not meant the sealing of Christ, but the sealing of us that have communion with him. The same spirit that seales the Redeemer, seales the redeemed.

Quest.

What is the manner of our sealing by the spirit?

Ans.

What our sealing is, and the use of it.

Sealing we know hath divers uses. First of all, *It doth imprint a likenesse of him that doth seale*: when the Kings Image is stamped

ped upon the wax, every thing in the wax answers to that in the seale, face to face, eye to eye, body to body. So wee are said to be *sealed*, when we carrie in our soules, the Image of the Lord Jesus, for the spirit sets the stamp of Christ upon every true Convert, there is the likeness of Christ in all things to be found in him: As the Child answers the Father, foot for foot, finger for finger in proportion, but not in quantity.

So it is in the sealing of a beleever, there is a likeness in the soule that is sealed by the spirit to the Lord Jesus, there is understanding of the same
hea-

heavenly supernaturall truthes; there is a judging of things as Christ judgeth, a loving of that which he loves, and a hating of that which hee hates, a rejoycing to doe that which he delights in, and a grieve to commit any thing that displeaseth his Majestie; every affection of the soul is carried that way, that the affections of our blessed Saviour are carried in proportion, every thing in the soule is answerable to him in its degree.

There is no grace in Christ, but there is the like in every Christian in some measure: The *obedience* of Christ to his Father, even to the death, is to be found

found in every true Christian. The *humility* whereby Christ abased himselfe, it is in every renewed heart. Christ works in the soule that receives him, a conformity to *himselfe*. The soule that beleeves that Christ hath loved him, and done such great things for him, is ambitious to expresse Christ in all his wayes. Being once in Christ, we shall delight to be transformed more and more into him. To heare the Image of the *second Adam* upon our breasts, to make it appeare that Jesus Christ lives in us, and that wee live not to our selves, but to him that died for us, to be *mecke* and heavenly

heavenly minded as hee was, talking and discour-
sing of spirituall things,
going about doing good
every where, active for
God, fruitfull in holinesse,
doing & receiving all the
good we are able, drawing
others from this world to
meditate of a better estate,
labouring for the advance-
ment of Gods Kingdome,
and approving our selves
to him; this is one use of
sealing, to imprint a *like-
nesse*.

2

A fecond use of a Seale
is *distinction*; Sealing is a
stamp upon one thing a-
mong many, it distinguish-
eth christians from others,
as we shall see after.

3

Againe, it serves for
appro-

appropriation; men seale those things that are their owne; Merchants we see set their stamp on those Wares which they have, or meane to have a right unto: It pleaseth God thus to condescend unto us, by applying himselfe to humane contracts. Hee appropriates his *own*, to shew that hee hath chosen and singled them out, for himselfe to delight in.

Sealing further serves to make things *authentical*, to give authority and excellencie: The *Seale* of the Prince, is the *authority* of the Prince: This gives validity to things answerable to the dignity and esteeme of him that seales. These

These are the foure principall uses of *sealing*. And God by his spirit doth al theſe to his. 1. He ſtamps his own Image upon us, he diſtinguiſheth us from others, even from the great reſuſe of the world. God by his ſpirit appropriates us to himſelfe, hee makes us to be his, and ſhewes that we are his, hee likewise authorizeth us, and puts an excellencie upon us, to ſecure us againſt all temptations; when wee have Gods ſeale on us, we ſtand firme in the greateſt triall: who ſhall ſeperate us from the love of God? wee dare deſie all objections of Sathan, and accusations of conſcience whatſoever.

soever. A man that hath Gods seale, stands impregnable in the most tempestuous season. For it is given for *our* assurance, and not for Gods, the Lord knowes who are *his*, hee seales not because he is ignorant, but for our comfort and establishment.

Whether is the *spirit* it selfe this seale, or the *work of the spirit*, and the graces thereof wrought in us?

Quest.

I answer, the Spirit of God where it is, is a sufficient seale that God hath set us out for himselfe, for *whosoever hath the Spirit of Christ, the same is his.* He is the Author of our sealing,

Answ.

sealing, so that except you take the *Spirit* for that which is wrought by the Spirit, you have not the comprehension of sealing, for, *that which the Spirit worketh, is the seale*; the spirit goes alwayes with his owne mark and impression; Other seales when they are removed from the stamp, the stamp remaines still; but the Spirit of God dwells, and keepes a perpetuall residence in the heart of a Christian; guiding him, moving him, enlightning him, governing him, comforting him, doing all offices of a seale in his heart, till hee hath brought him to heaven. The Holy Ghost

Ghost never leaves us, it is the sweetest inhabitant that ever lodging was given to; he doth all the saving good that is done to the soule, and is perpetually with his own work in joy and comfort; though he seeme sometimes to be in a corner of the heart, and is not easily discerned, yet he alwayes dwels in his sealed ones.

What is that stamp, that the Spirit seales us withall?

Quest.

The Spirit works in this order for the most part; First of all, the *Spirit* doth together with the *Word* (which is the instrument, and the Chariot wherein it is carried) convince us of

Answ.

of the ill that is in us, and the misery attending on us for the same. It convinceth us of *sinne*, and the fearefull estate we are in by that, and abaseth us thereupon, therefore it is called the *Spirit of bondage*, because it makes a man tremble and quake, till he see his peace made up in Christ.

2

When hee hath done this, then he convinceth us of *righteousnesse*, by a sweet light discovering the excellencies of the Lord Jesus, and the remedy in him provided for sinners. God opens the eye of the soul, to see the all-sufficiency of his Sons sanctification, and inclines the

the heart to cast it selfe by
faith upon him.

When we are through-
ly convinced of the *ill* that
is in us, and of the good
that is in Christ, and are
moved by the *Holy Ghost*,
to go out of our selves
and imbrace reconciliati-
on in the Lord Jesus, then
a superadded worke is
vouchsafed unto us; for
the Spirit daily perfecteth
his owne work; he addes
therefore after all, his
Seale, to confirme us;
which *Seale* is not *faith*:
for the Apostle saith, *After
you beleaved, you were
sealed*, where we see the
work of *faith* and sealing
distinguished: first the soul
is set in a good estate, and
then

3

Ephes. i.
13.

then follows assurance and stablishment.

Ans.

But what needs confirmation when we *beleeve*? Is not *faith* confirmation enough? when a man may know by a private reflect act of the soule, that he is in the state of grace?

Quest.

This act of ours in *beleeving* is oft terribly shaken; and God is wondrous desirous that we should be secure of his love; hee knowes hee can have no glory, nor we any solid peace else: therefore when we by *faith* have sealed to his truth, he sees that wee need further sealing that our faith be current and good; for all is little enough in the time
of

of temptation, the single witnesse of our soul is not strong enough in great assaults. For sometimes the Spirit is so tossed and disquieted with temptations, that we cannot reflect aright on our selves, nor discern what is in our own breasts without much adoe; therefore God first workes *faith* to apply the promise, *Whosoever beleeves in Christ shall be saved.* I beleeve in Christ, therefore I shall be saved, and then sealeth this beleeve with an addition of his holy Spirit; for this sealing is a work upon beleeving, an honouring of *faith* with a superadded confirmation.

G. How

Quest.

How shall wee know that there is such a spirituall sealing in us ?

Answ.

I answer, when we truly beleeve, the *Spirit of adoption*, reveales unto us that we are the sonnes of God, by a secret whispering, and intimation to the soule, (which the beleeving heart feeles better than I am able to expresse) saying, *be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven*; there is a sweet kisse, vouchsafed to the soule: the Lord refresheth it with the light of his countenance, and assures it, that all enmity is now slaine: I am thy salvation, thou art for ever mine, and I am thine; because thou beleevest

vest, behold thou art honoured to be my child.

Againe the *Spirit of adoption* quickens and fills the soule with heavenly ejaculations to God, it stirs up fervent supplications to cry *Abba Father*. The soule when it truly beleeves, hath a bold and familiar speech to God.

There are two things in the prayer of a Christian that are incompetible with a carnall man : there is first an inward *confidence*, and secondly, an *earnestnesse* in the soule, whereby he goes to God as a Child to his loving *Father*, not considering his owne worthinesse or meanes, but the constant

love that is bore to him.

This spirituall speech of God to the soule, and of the soule to God, is an evident demonstration of our truth in grace, because we can do that which no Hypocrite in the world can attaine to.

3

Thirdly, this sealing of the Spirit after wee beleeve, is knowne by the worke of Sanctification which it effecteth in us; the holy Spirit *seales* our spirits, by stamping the likenesse of Christ upon us; so as when a man finds in his soule, some lineaments of the heavenly Image, he may know thereby, that hee is *translated from death to life*; when
he

he finds his heart subdued to humility and obedience, to such a holy and gracious frame as Christs was; he may cleerely discern that he hath something more than the *Old man* in him : when a man can say , naturally I am proud, but now I can abase my selfe ; naturally, I am full of malice, now I can love, and pray heartily for my enemies ; naturally I am lumpish & dead-hearted, now I can joy in the Holy Ghost ; naturally, I am apt to distrust the Lord, and be discontented with my condition, now I can rest securely upon his *Promise* and *Providence* : sin hath been my

G 3 delight,

delight, now it is my sorrow and heart-breaking, I finde somewhat contrary to corruption in me. I carry the *Image of the second Adam* about me now: I say, whosoever hath this blessed change, may rest assured of his right to happinesse. *Know you not that Christ is in you, except you be reprobates*, saith the Apostle. A Christian that upon a through search finds something of Christ alwayes in his soule, can never want a sweet evidence that he is sealed to *the day of redemption*.

4

The fourth way is by the joy of the Spirit, which is the beginning of Heaven as it were, and a possessing

sessing of glory before our time ; there are few of Gods children, but in the cours of their pilgrimage, first or last, have this divine impression wrought in them, enlarging and ravishing their soules to joy in the Almighty.

Yet this is especially scene after conflict, when the soule hath combated with some strong corruption or temptation , *To him that overcomes will I give of the bidden Mannah,* saith Christ, *and a white stone which none can read but he that hath it,* that is, hee shall have assurance that he is in the state of grace, and the sweet savour of goodnesse it selfe

G 4 shall

shall be his portion; usually God gives comfort after wee have conflicted with some sinfull disposition and have got the victory, as we see in *Iob*, after *God* had exercised that Champion a long time, at the last hee discovered himself in a glorious manner to him.

In the midst of afflictions, when a Christian is under great crosses, and God sees hee must bee supported with spirituall strength, or else he sinks, then he puts in with supply from above: when the creature cannot help us, the Creator of all things will. Thus *Paul* in the midst of the *Dungeon* being

ing sealed with the Spirit,
sang at midnight when he
 was in the *Stocks*: and so
David in the midst of per-
secution: *Daniel* in a Lions
 Den: the *three Children*
 in the fiery furnace, &c.
 God doth as Parents,
 smile on their little ones
 when they are sick and de-
 jected: hee reserves his
 choicest comforts for the
 greatest exigents: when
 God hath a great worke
 for his children to doe, or
 some sharpe suffering for
 them to undergoe, as
 an encouragement before-
 hand, hee oft enlargeth
 their spirits that they may
 be able to go through all.
 As our Saviour Christ
 had *James* and *John* with

him upon the Mountaine,
to strengthen the against
his ensuing suffering.

Let us then examine
our selves by that which
hath beene delivered :
hath God spoken to thy
soule and said, I am thy
salvation, thy finnes are
remitted, and thy person
received into my favour :
doth God stirre up thy
spirit to call upon him,
(especially in extremity)
and to go with boldnesse
and earnestnesse to his
Throne ? Surely this is an
evidence of the *seale* of the
Spirit, for who ever wants
this, cannot look God in
the face, when distresse is
upon him: *Saul* in this case
goes to the *Witch*, and
Achitophel

Achitophel to desperate conclusions: *Indas* in extremity, we see what becomes of him? So every one that hath not this sealing of the Spirit; (to whom God speakes not peace by shedding abroad the love of Christ in his heart) must needs sinck as Lead in the bottome of the Sea, which hath no consistence, till it come to the *Center*, to Hell. Did you ever feele the joy of the Spirit in holy duties, after inward striving against your lusts, and getting ground of them; this is a certaine signe that God hath sealed you.

But you will say, How
can

Quest.

Quest.

can that be a *seale*? A seale continues with the thing, but the joy of the Spirit comes after the work of the Spirit, and abides not with us?

Ans^r.

I answer, though wee have not alwayes the joy of the Spirit, yet we have the *Spirit* of joy, which though it be not knowne by joy, yet may be discerned by its operation and working. A Christian may have a gracious work of the Spirit in him, and yet want the delight and joy of the Spirit; therefore when that failes, look to thy sanctification, and see what resemblance of Christ is formed in thee. See if thy heart be humble

ble and broken, if thou have a heavenly disposition like to thy Saviour; when the *joy* of the Spirit ceaseth, goe to the work of the Spirit, and from the work of the Spirit, to the *voyce* of the Spirit; Canst thou cry to God with strong supplications? or if thou canst not pray with distinct words, canst thou mourne and groane? *The Spirit helps our infirmities, when wee know not what to ask.* This sighing & groaning is the voyce of Gods Spirit, which hee will regard wheresoever he finds it. This made *Iob* in his distresse, to swim above water.

If one be in the midst
of

of extremity, and can seriously seek to God, it is an undoubted signe that such a one is sealed, especially when the corruption of his soule joynes with Sathans temptations the more to afflict him; for a sinner in the midst of stormes & clouds of darknesse, then to cast anchor, and quiet his soule in Christ, argues great *faith*: So when a temptation closes with our corruption, and affliction yeelds ground to further the temptation, then to pray and rely securely upon God, is a gracious signe; for Sathan useth the afflictions we are in, as temptations to shake our faith;

as thus, Canst thou be a child of God, and be so exercised? so vilified, so persecuted? Didst thou belong to Christ, would ever these crosses, & losses, and miseries have befallen thee? deceive not thy selfe: Thus affliction is a weapon to temptation, for Sathan to help his fiery darts with, he having such a dangerous party in us (as our own corruption) doth us the more harme continually.

How shall a man know whether God hath a part in him?

I answer. If he can run against the streame; if he find his soule resisting Sathans temptations, & raising

Quest.

Answ.

Psal. 42. 13

sing him above afflictions, standing out, and combating with corruptions to the uttermost; whē he can check his carnal heart that drawes him downwards, saying: *Why art thou cast downe, O my soule, and why art thou disquieted within me: it is a good signe.*

David found inward corruptions, and outward afflictions joyning with Sathans temptations, to depresse his spirit, hereupon he chides his owne soule. *Why is it thus with thee, why art thou dejected in this manner?* and then he layes a charge upon it, *Trust in God.* Whatsoever hardship wee meet with in the world, yet there is hope

hope in God still ; though we can find little comfort below , yet there are rivers of consolation above ; it argues a gracious heart to quiet ones selfe in God in the worst times.

I beseech you let us labour to have our soules sealed with the Spirit of God, to have further and clearer evidence of our estate in grace ; it is a blessed thing to have Christ live in us , the enemies of our salvation are exceeding many, and how soone death or judgement may ceaze us , wee know not, God will set none at his right hand, but his Sheep, those that have his owne Image on them ; his best
Sheep

Vse.

Psal. 45.

Sheep have no outward mark, but an inward; the world sees not their beauty, *The Kings daughter is all glorious within.*

How comfortably will the soule commend it self to Christ, when it finds it self stamped with the Spirit of Christ? when he can chearefully say, Lord Jesus receive my soule; thou that hast redeemed me by thy blood, and sealed me by thy Spirit, acknowledge thine owne likeness in me, though it be not as it should be, yet there is somewhat of thine in me.

Beloved, wee must not give false evidence of our selves, as wee must not
against

against others ; what a comfort hath a sealed soul in the houre of death, and in all extremities ? what a difference is there betweene such a soule, and others in the time of affliction, as in the time of pestilence, warre, and persecution for Christ ? The soul that is sealed knowes that hee is marked out for happinesse in the world to come. Whatsoever befalls him in this life, hee knowes that God in all confusion of times knows his own *Seale*, and that his *destroying Angell* shal spare and passe over those that are marked, *Ezech. 9.* And though our bodies escape not, yet our soules shall.

Iosias

Psalme 116.

Iosias wee see was taken away from the evill to come, and *Lot* was delivered from the judgement of the *Sodomites*. If wee partake not of the sinnes of the wicked, wee shall never partake of their plagues; God hath a speciall care of his *little ones* in this life, and if hee take them away, yet their *death* is *pretious in his sight*; hee will not part with them but upon speciall consideration: he sees if they live it will be worse for them, their pretious soules are in continuall danger; hee sees it is best for them to be gathered to God, and the soules of perfect ones in heaven, therefore hee pro-

provides a shelter to free them from all stormes on earth.

And as hee hath an eye over them in regard of outward miseries ; so in respect of spirituall corruption and infection ; as *Revel. 7.* Gods holy ones were *sealed*, so many of such a *Tribe*, and so many of such a *Tribe*, to signifie, that God hath alwayes some that hee will keepe and preserve from the lea-
prous contagion of sinne, and Antichrist ; even in evill times God hath his *little flock* still.

In the obscure ages of the Church, 900 yeares after Christ, when there was little learning and
good-

goodnesse in the world,
and *Egyptian* darknes had
over-spred the earth. God
had alwayes sealed ones,
marked out for himselfe,
whom he preserved from
the danger of dark times;
why then should wee be
afraid of evill tidings? Let
any affliction or death it
selfe come, Christ will
know his own stamp in us,
he hath a book of remem-
brance, for those that are
his, and when hee gathers
his jewells, they will bee
highly set by. God in
common calamities suf-
fers his luggage, (wicked
men) to goe to wrack, but
he will secure his jewells,
his darlings, what ever
come of it; labour there-
fore

fore to bee a sealed person.

But you will say, what shall I account of my self, if there bee but a little signe of grace in me?

Quest.

Be not discouraged, you know in wax, though the stamp be almost out, yet it is currant in Law notwithstanding. Put the case the stamp of the *Prince* be an old Coyne, is it not currant though it bee crackt? Suppose the mark of the Spirit, should bee dim and blurred, scarce discernable in us, (this ought to bee our shame and grieve) yet some evidences of grace are still remaining; there are some sighes and groanes against corrup-

Ans.

corruption, which may continually support us: if we mourne in our spirits, and doe not joyne with our lusts, nor allow our selves in them, this is a divine impression, though it bee (as it were) almost worne out: the more comfort wee desire, the fresher she should keepe this seale of comfort.

And labour to grow in faith and obedience, that we may reade our evidence cleerely, that it be not over-growne with the dust of the world, so as we cannot see it. Sometimes Gods children have the graces of the Spirit in them, yet they yeeld so much to feares and doubt-
ings,

ings, that they can read nothing but their corruption. When we bid them puruse their evidences, they can see nothing but *worldlinesse*, nothing but *pride* and *envie*, because they grieve the holy Spirit by their negligence and distrust. Though there be a stamp in them, yet God holds the soule from it, and gives men up to mistake their estates, for not stirring up the graces of his Spirit in them.

Honour God by beleeving, and he will honour thee by stamping his Spirit more cleerely on thee, what a comfort is it to have the evidence of a gracious soule at all times.

H When

When a man carries about him the marke of the Spirit, what in the world can discourage such a soule? On the contrary, if a man have not something above nature in him, when death & judgement comes, how miserable is his condition? If a man be a King or an Emperour of the World, and have not an interest in Christs righteousness, ere long he shall be stripped of all, and adjudged to eternall torments. Oh the excellency of mans soule, a Jewell more to be prized then a Princes Diadem.

It is the folly of the times to set up curious Pictures, but what a poore delight

delight is this in comparison of the ambition of a true Christian, to see the Image of Christ stamped in his soule, to finde the joy of the Spirit, and God speaking peace to his inner man.

The transforming of our selves into the image of Christ, is the best Picture in the world; therefore we should labour for the new creature, that as we grow downward one way, we may grow up towards Heaven another; that as the life of nature decayes, so the spirituall life may bee more active and working. It should be our daily study while we live in this world to attain

that holinesse, without which no man shall ever see God.

There is besides the common broad Seale of God, his privie Seal. What is the reason that many proud hearted persons are damned? the truth is, they are all for externall contentments, and despise the ordinances of G O D: for though they stand upon their admission into the Church, upon the common seales and prerogatives (which in themselves are excellent) yet relying on these things overmuch betrayes many soules to the Devill in the time of distresse. It is an other manner of seale than the
outward

outward seale in the Sacrament, that must settle peace in the conscience. When once the beginnings of faith are wrought in us, then wee may with comfort thinke upon our receiving of the Communion, but the speciall thing to be eyed, is the hidden seale. If the externall meanes work no inward sanctificatiō in our hearts, we shall be the worse rather than the better for them: yet we must not be so prophane as to think slightly of Gods Ordinances, they are of great consequence.

For when Satan shakes the confidence of a Christian, and saith, Thou art

H 3 an

an Hypocrite, God doth not love thee ; *these* help us to hold out : why faith the soule, I can speak by experience that I have found the contrary ; the Lord hath removed my feares, he hath pardoned my sinne and accepted my person, he hath given me many *Pretious Promises* to support my spirit. Here is the excellency of the *Sacrament* , it comes more home to me, it seales the generall Promises of God particularly to my selfe : for finding the inward worke of the Spirit in my heart, and God having strengthened my faith by the outward seale , I can defie Satan with all his accusations,

cufations, and look death
in the face with comfort.
We should labour there-
fore to observe Gods sea-
ling dayes, when he uses
to manifest himselfe to his
people ; which though it
may be every day (if wee
be spiritually exercised)
yet it is in the Lords day
more especially , for then
his ordinance and his Spi-
rit go together.

Now there is a sealing of
persons, and of *truths*, be-
sides the sealing of our
estates, that we are the
children of God ; there is
a sealing of every particu-
lar truth to a Christian.
For where there is grace
to beleeve the truth, God
seales those truths firme-

ly to that soule by the comforts of his Spirit. For example, this is a truth, *Whosoever beleeves in Christ, shall not perish but have everlasting life.* Now the same Spirit that stirs up the soule to beleeeve this, scales it fast upon the conscience even to death; there is no promise, but upon our beleeeving the same, it is sealed by God upon us: for those truths only abide firme in the soule which the Holy Ghost sets on. What is the reason that many forget their consolations, the reason is they heare much but the Spirit settles nothing on their hearts.

Quest.

What is the reason that
unlettered

lettered men many times stand out in their profession to blood, whereas those that are more able and learned, yeeld to any thing. The reason is, the knowledge of the one is set fast upon the *soule*; the Spirit brings his seale and this mans *knowledge* close together: whereas the learning and abilities of the other, is only a discursive thing swimming in the brain without any solid foundation; their knowledge of truths is not spiritual: they see not heavenly things by heavenly, but by a naturall light. Those that would not apostatize, must have a knowledge sutable to the
H: s: things

Answe.

things they know ; they must see spirituall things by the Spirit of G O D. Therefore when we come to heare the Word, wee should not come with strong conceits of our owne, to bring all to our wits, but with reverent dispositions and dependance upon God, that he would teach us together with his Ministers, and close with his Ordinances so as to fasten truths upon our soules, else shall wee never hold out : for that which must stablish and quiet the soule, must bee greater than the soule.

In time of tentations when the terroures of the Almighty encompasse us,
when

when God layes open our
conscience, and writes
bitter things against us,
those truths that most sa-
tisfie the soule at such
a time, must be above
the naturall capacity of
the soule, therefore saith
the Apostle, *It is God that*
establishest, and God by his
Spirit that seales us up un-
to the day of redemption,
because divine truths of
themselves in the bare
letter, cannot stirre up the
heart; it is only the bles-
sed Spirit, which is above
our spirits, that must qui-
et the conscience in all
perplexities; the Lord can
soone still the soule when
he settles spirituall truths
upon it: therefore go to
him

him in thy distresse and trouble of minde; send up ejaculations to God, that hee would seale the comfort revealed in his word to thy soule, that as it is true in it selfe, so it may be true to thee likewise.

This is a necessary observation for us all. Oh we desire in the houre of death to finde some comforts, that bee standing comforts, that may uphold us against Hell and judgement. Know that nothing will do this but spirituall truths spiritually knowne, but holy truths set on by the Holy Ghost upon the soule. Oft therefore enter into thine heart and examine upon what grounds

grounds and motives thou beleevest; Consider well what it is thou beleevest, and upon what evidences, and with what light, otherwise expect not to find solid peace.

What course may a Christian generally take when hee wants comfort and inward refreshing.

There are in 1 *Iohn* 5. three witnesses *in heaven*, & three *in earth*, to secure us of our estate in grace: The three witnesses in heaven are, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*: And the three witnesses in earth are, the *Spirit*, the *Water*, and *Bloud*: and these three on earth, and those three in heaven agree

Quest.

Ans.

In want of comfort what is to be done.

agree in one. Now by the Spirit here is meant the feelings and sweet motions thereof, the water may well be the Laver of *Sanctification*, & by bloud is understood the sufferings of Christ for our justification.

When therefore wee find that extraordinarie seale I spake of before (the joyes of the Spirit of God) that it is not in us. What shall we doe? shall wee despaire then? No, then goe to the water; when the witnesse of the Spirit is silent, goe to the work of the Spirit, see what gracious dispositions are found in thee.

Quest.

I, but what shall we do
if

if the waters be troubled in the soule, as some times there is such a confusion, that we cannot see the Image of God upon it in sanctification.

Then goe to the *bloud*, there is alwayes comfort; goe to the *fountaine set open for Indah and Ierusalem to wash in*, that is never dry. If we find much sinne upon our consciences, and no peace in our hearts; apply the bloud of sprinkling, that wil give rest.

Ans.

When thou findest nothing but corruption and filthinesse in thy soule; when thou seeest neither joy nor *sanctification* of Spirit, goe to the Lord Jesus,

Jesus, and hee will purge thee from all guilt, and wash thee with clean water. But to goe on.

Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.

This is the third word, borrowed from humane Contracts, to set forth Gods gracious work in the soule : *Annointing* wee had before & *sealing*; now here is *earnest*. The variety of expression shewes, there is a great remainder of unbeliefe in the soule of man, which causeth the blessed Spirit to use so many words to manifest Gods mind, and assure the soule of

of salvation, stablishing, annointing, sealing, and earnest.

And indeed so it is, howsoever we in the time of prosperity (when all things goe well with us) are apt to presume our estate is good, yet in the houre of death when conscience is awaked, we are prone to nothing so much as to call all in question, and beleve the lies and doubts and feares of our owne deceitfull hearts, more than the undoubted truth and promise of God. Therefore the Lord takes all courses to establish us, he gives us rich and pretious promises, hee gives us the holy *Spirit* to confirme

firm us in those promises, he *seals* us with that Spirit, and gives us a comfortable *earnest* thereof, and all to settle these wretched & unbelieving hearts of ours. So desirous is God that wee should be well conceited of him, that hee loves us better than wee love our selves; Hee prizeth our love so much, that he labours by all meanes to secure us of our eternall welfare; as knowing, that except we apprehend his love to us, wee can never love him againe, nor delight in him as we ought to doe.

Now the Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance in heaven, wee are sonnes here

here indeed; but wee are not heires invested into the blessed estate we have title to; God doth not keep all our happinesse till another world, but gives us somewhat to comfort us in our absence from our husband; hee gives us the Holy Ghost in our hearts, as a pledge of that glorious condition, which wee shall one day have eternally with him; this is the meaning of the words.

But to shew you more particularly, In what regard the Spirit is called an *earnest*.

First of all, you know an earnest is used, for security of a Contract. So the holy Spirit doth secure

I
Why the
Spirit is
called an
earnest.

cure us of the blessed estate, we shall have in heaven for ever.

2

Secondly, an earnest is part of the bargaine, a part of the whole which is secured, though it be a very little part; yet it is a part; So it is with the Spirit of God, in its gracious work upon our hearts, the joy of the Spirit is a part of that full joy and happinesse, which shall bee revealed hereafter to us.

3

Thirdly, an earnest is little in comparison of the whole; So the Spirit in the work and graces thereof, is little in regard of that fulnesse which wee shall have in heaven; But though an earnest be smal
in

in it selfe, yet it is great in security ; A shilling secures a bargaine of a thousand pound we see ; Wee value an earnest not for its owne worth, so much as (for that which it is a pledge of) for the excellent bargaine and rich possession which it doth interest us unto: So the Spirit of God with its blessed effects in the soule, the joy and peace of the Spirit, chearing and reviving perplexed sinners ; this earnest, I say, though it be little in it selfe, yet it is great to us in respect of the assurance that we have by it.

Againe, it hath the terme of an *earnest*, because

cause an earnest is given rather for the security of the party that receives it, than in regard of him that gives it; So God gives us the *earnest of his Spirit*, grace and comfort in this life, not so much for God, for hee meanes to give us heaven and happinesse, when wee are dissolved: As he hath passed his promise, so hee will undoubtedly performe the same; Hee is Lord and Master of his word, Hee is Jehovah that gives a being to his word, as well as to every other thing: But notwithstanding having to doe with mistrustfull, unbelieving men, hee is pleased to condescend to our weak

weaknesse, hee stoops to the lowest capacity, and frames his speech to the understanding of the simplest soule; for which purpose this terme of earnest is here borrowed.

In these respects the Spirit of God together with the graces of it, and the comforts it brings (for they are not divided) is called an *earnest*. And thus having cleared the point, we will observe this doctrine for our further instruction.

That a Christian ought to be, and may be assured of his interest in God, because (as I said before) an earnest is given not so much for Gods sake, as for our

our sakes ; this then must needs follow from hence, Either none have this *earnest*, or else those that have it, may be assured of their comfortable condition. Otherwise God is fickle, and playes fast and loose with his children, which is blasphemy to affirm. Besides, if none have this *earnest*, then the Apostle speaks false, when he saith, *God hath stablished us, and given us the earnest of his Spirit*, which is horrible impiety once to conceive.

Quest.

If this be so, then either such as have this seale and earnest of the Spirit, may be assured of their estate in grace or not ; And if
not,

not, where is the fault? Will not God really and truly vouchsafe unto his people this earnest of the Spirit in their hearts? Undoubtedly he will, he is desirous that wee should be perswaded of his love in all things, and therefore we may and ought to bee assured of his favour towards us: *S. Iohns* whole Epistle containes little else, but sundry markes & evidences how we may know that wee are the children of God: wherefore was Christ himselfe sealed of the Father to the Office of Mediatour? wherefore did he die and rise againe? and wherefore doth hee

Ans.
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meanes
truly in
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his ear-
nest.

I still

still make intercession for us in Heaven? that wee should doubt of Gods love? (when as he hath given us that which is greater than salvation, yea greater than all the world, even his owne Sonne.) no certainly; can we desire a more ample testimony of his favour, than he hath already bestowed upon us? Is it not the errand of all Gods mercies to bring us neerer to himselfe? that we should not doubt of his love, but rest securely upon him: why then doe we distrust the Almighty, who is truth it selfe, and never failed any?

Yet we must know that
Chri-

Christians have not at all times alike assurance of their interest, for there is an *infancy* of grace, where in we are ignorant of our own condition. And there is a time of *desertion*, when as God to make us looke better to our footing, leaves us a little, as if he would forsake us quite, when indeed hee onely withdrawes his assistance for a while to make us cleave the closer to him. There be also certain seasons, wherein though we are assured of Gods favor, yet we have no feeling or apprehension of the same which differeth in Christians much, according as they are more or lesse sen-

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Assurance
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sible of their estates. Some againe use not that care and diligence in the use of meanes which God requires, whereupon they are justly deprived of that inward peace and comfort which others enjoy. There is a difference likewise in growth and continuance in Christianity, some are strong Christians, and some weak, answerable whereunto is the difference of assurance of Gods love usually in the hearts of his people. Nay, its possible that for a long time, the Lords *Jewels* (his redeemed ones) may want this blessed comfort.

A double
act of
faith to
work assurance.

For wee must conceive there is a double act of faith.

First,

First, an act, whereby a poore distressed sinner casts himselfe upon God as reconciled to him in Christ.

1

Secondly, there is a reflex act, whereby *knowing* that wee rely upon the truth and promise of the Almighty, we have assurance of his favour. Now a man may performe the one act, and not the other: many of the Saints sometimes can hardly say that they have any assurance, but yet notwithstanding, they will daily cast themselves upon the rich mercy and free grace of God in Jesus Christ.

2

Besides, there are many things which may hinder

Things hindring our assurance.

I 3 this

this act of assurance, because (together with beleeving) God may present such things to my minde as may so damp and disquiet my soule, that I cannot have any definitive thoughts, about that which God would especially have mee to thinke upon.

As when God will humble a man, he takes not away the Spirit of *faith* wholly from him, but sets before such a sinfull creature, his anger and sore displeasure, together with the hellish torments and paines of the damned, as due to his soule; which makes him for the present to be in an estate little differing

fering from the Reprobate: so that he is far from saying, he hath any assurance at that time: yet notwithstanding he doth not leave off nor renounce his confidence, but casts himselfe upon Gods mercy still; *Though the Lord kill him, yet will he trust in him*, although he sees nothing but terror & wrath before him. This God doth to tame our presumption, and prepare us for the enjoyment of his future glory. If we feele not *sense* of assurance, it is good to blesse God for what we have. Wee cannot denie but God offers himselfe in mercy to us, and that hee intends our

good thereby : for so we ought to construe his mercifull dealing towards us, and not have him in jealousie without ground. Had wee but willing hearts to praise God, for that which we cannot but acknowledge comes from him, he will bee ready in his time to shew himself more cleerely to us. We taste of his goodnesse many wayes, & it is accompanied with much patience : and these in their natures should leade us, not only to *repentance*, but to neerer *dependance* on him: we ought to follow that which *God* leads us unto, though he hath not yet acquainted

ted us with his secrets.

These things we must observe, that we give not a false evidence against our selves, though wee have not such assurance as wee have had, yet alwayes there is some ground in us whereupon we may bee comforted, that wee are Gods children, could we but search into it. Let us not then be negligent in labouring for the same, and in the Lords good time we shall certainly obtaine it: it is the prophaness of the world that they improve not those helps which God hath afforded for this purpose.

Nay they had rather stagger and take content-

I 5. ment

ment in their own wayes, saying; If God will love mee in a loose licentious course, so it is, but I will not give diligenceto make my calling and election sure : I will never barre my selfe of such profits and delights, nor forsake all, chiefly to minde spirituall things.

Whereas wee ought constantly to endeavour for assurance of grace, that God may have honour from us, and we the more comfort from him againe; that we may live in the world above the world, and passe cheerefully through the manifold troubles and temptations which befall us in our pilgrimage. A

A man in his pure naturals will swell against this doctrine, because he fees no such thing, and thinks what is above his measure, is hypocrisie. He makes himselfe the rule of other Christians to walke by, and therefore values and esteemes others by his uncertaine condition : but the heart of a Christian hath a light in it, the Spirit of God in his soule makes him discern what estate he is in.

In a naturall man all is dark, hee sees nothing because his heart is in a Dungeon, his eye being dark, the *whole man* must needs be in blindness. All is alike to him, he sees no difference

difference betweene flesh and spirit, and therefore holds on in a doubting hope; in a confused disposition and temper of soule to his dying-day.

But a Christian that labours to walk in the comforts of the holy Ghost, cannot rest in such an unsettled estate; he dares not venture his eternall welfare upon such infirme grounds: What? to depart this life, and be tossed in uncertainty, whether a man goes to Heaven or to Hell! What a miserable perplexity must such a soule needs be in? Therefore he is still *working out his salvation*, and storing up of grace against the evill day. And

And well may this condition challenge all our diligence in labouring for it: because it is neither attained nor maintained without the strength and prime of our care, for the sense of Gods favour will not bee kept, without keeping him in our best affections, above all things else in the world besides; without keeping of our hearts constantly close and neere to him, which can never bee done without keeping a most narrow watch over our loose spirits, which are ever ready to stray from him, and fall to the creature.

It cannot be kept without exact walking, and serious

Sense of
Gods love
how pre-
served.

rious self-deniall. But what of that? Can wee spend our labours to better purpose? One sweet beame of Gods countenance will requite all abundantly. A Christian indeed undergoes more trouble and paines (especially with his own heart) than others do, but what is that to his gaine? One day spent in communion with God, is sweeter than a thousand without it. What comforts so great as those that are fetched from the Fountaine? Oh woe to him that savours not these *heavenly*, but lingers after *car-nall* comforts. It cannot but grieve the holy Spirit, when

when the *consolations* of the Almighty are either *forgotten*, or seem *nothing* to us.

But why doth the *spirit* thus *establiſh* and *ſeale* us, and conveigh grace to our ſoules? why doth that doe all?

Queſt.

Because ſince the fall we have no principles of ſupernaturall good in us; and there muſt be a principle above nature to work grace in our barren hearts.

Anſw.

I

Againe there is ſtill remaining in us an utter averſneſſe to that which is ſpiritually good in the beſt, therefore there muſt bee ſomewhat to overpower their corrupt diſpoſition.

But

2

Quest.

But why the *Spirit* rather than the *Father* or the *Sonne*? Hee comes from both, and therefore is fit to witnesse the love of both; the Holy Ghost is in the breast of the *Father* and the *Sonne*, hee knowes their secret affection towards us. A mans spirit is acquainted with his inmost thoughts: the blessed Spirit is privie to the hidden love of God, and of Jesus Christ to us poore creatures, which we are strangers unto, therefore none so fit to cheere and revive us.

Indeed the love originally is from the *Father*, but in regard of application of what is wrought by the
the

the *Sonne*, all proceeds from the *Holy Ghost*; he receives grace from Christ for us. It must needs be so, because no lesse than the Spirit of God can quiet our perplexed spirits in time of tentation. For when the conscience of a guilty person is affrighted, what man can allay its feares? That which must settle a troubled spirit, must be a spirit above our owne. It being no easie thing to bring the soule and God together after peace is broken: we have both wind and tide against us in this businesse, grace being but weak, and corruption strong in the best of us.

We

We should labour therefore for heavenly spirits, & get something more than a man in us. There can never be any true peace attained, till the Spirit from above settle it in our souls. An un sanctified heart is an unpacified heart. If there be a neglect of holinesse, the soule can never bee soundly quiet; where there is not a cleare conscience, there cannot be a calm conscience, that is a generall rule. Sinne like *Ionas* in the ship will raise continuall stormes both within and without a man. Take away *God* once, and farewell all true tranquillity. Spirituall comforts flow immediatly from the Spirit

rit of Comfort, who hath his office designed for that purpose.

But how shall we know that we have the *Spirit*?

Quest.

How may a man know that hee hath a soule? by living and moving, by actions vitall, &c. Even so may a man know hee hath the Spirit of God by its blessed effects and operations: it is not idle in us, but as the soule quickens the body, so doth the Spirit the soule. Every saving grace is a signe that the Spirit is in us. Wheresoever the Spirit dwells, hee transforms the soule, & changes the party (like himselfe) to be holy, and gracious, this is an undoubted sym-

Ans.

symptome of the Spirits habitation.

2

Secondly, all spirituall graces are with conflict, for that which is true, is with a great deale of resistance of that which is counterfeit; *the flesh* still lusts against *the spirit*, and Satan cannot endure to see any man walk comfortably to heaven. What, thinks hee, such a base creature as this is to have the earnest of salvation, to live here as if hee were in heaven already, and to despise all opposite powers; sure hee shall have little peace this way, I will disquiet and vex his spirit; if he will goe to heaven, hee shall go mourning thither.

This

This is the reasoning of the curled spirit, whereupon hee labours to shake our assurance, and follow us with perplexities. The grace and comfort of a Christian, is with much conflict and tentations, not only with Satan, but with his owne heart; which so long as guilt remaines, will ever be misgiving and casting of doubts; there must therefore be a higher power, than the soule of man to quiet and allay its owne troubles.

Thirdly, the Spirit enables us to the practise of those duties, which by nature wee are averse unto, as to love an enemy, to overcome our revenge,
to

to be humble in prosperity, and contented with any estate. It drawes our affection heavenward, and makes us delight in God above all, as our best portion. Hee that hath the Spirit, joyes in spirituall company and employment; he hates sinne as being contrary to that blessed *earnest* which hee hath received. He looks on things as God doth, and approves of the same, as hee is made more or lesse spirituall thereby, and so is brought neerer to that fountaine of Goodnesse, God himselfe; by them he esteemes his best being to be in Christ, and therefore labours more & more
to

to be transformed into his likenesse. He values nothing in the world further than it conduceth to his spirituall welfare. If all be well for that, hee accounts himselfe happy whatsoever else befalls him. Indeed where the Spirit hath taken up his firme abode, that soul will little set by any outward change. Nothing can be very ill with a man that hath all well within him.

But that I may not distract your thoughts, you shall find divers properties of the Spirit of God in *Romans* 8. which I will briefly touch. First, it is said that the Spirit where it is, *dwells* in that heart, as
in

Symptomes of the Spirits inhabitation, out of *Rom. 8.*

in an house, *it rules* where ever it comes. The Holy Ghost will not be an underling to our lusts, it repaires and makes up all our inward breaches. The Spirit prepares his owne dwelling, he begets knowledge and acquaintance of God within us; hee is not in us as hee is in the wicked, hee onely knocks at their hearts, but hath not his abode there.

2

Secondly, when the Spirit comes into a man, hee subdues whatsoever is contrary to it, and makes way for it self by pulling down all strong holds which oppose it; therefore wee are said *to mortifie the deeds of the flesh*, by the Spirit, ver

13. Those that by help of the Spirit have got the victory of sinne, can in no wise be led as slaves by the *flesh*: as on the contrary, he that cherishes corruption, and crucifies it not (by spirituall reasons, but out of civill respects to be freed from aspersions, and to uphold his reputation or the like) is a meere stranger to the Holy Ghosts working.

Thirdly, as many as are led by the Spirit of God *are the Sonnes of God*. As the Angell went before the *Israelites* from *Egypt* into *Canaan*; so the Spirit of God goes along with his in all their wayes, removing all lets, and

K streng-

strengthening against all impediments in their Christian race. It conducts us sweetly, not (violently) as the Devill doth those that are possessed with the Spirit; wee are led strongly indeed, because it is against corruption within us, and opposition from without us, but yet sweetly to preserve the liberty and freedome of the soule still. We are all by nature like children or blinde men, wee cannot lead our selves, the Spirit must be our conduct, or wee shall wander and goe aside presently. Those therefore that enjoy the same, submit themselves to its guidance, and direction in all things.

Again,

Again, *the Spirit stirres up sighes and groanes, that cannot be expressed.* When we are not able to pray, or lay open the griefes of our soules, if wee can but send out sighes & groanes to heaven, they shall bee accepted; for God will heare the voyce of his own Spirit, from whence these sobs & complaints come. How should wee be overwhelmed with despaire, did not the Spirit support us? Those therefore that in extremity have nothing to comfort them, yet are able to send forth holy desires to the Lord, may certainly conclude that the Spirit is in them.

4

Again, *the Spirit makes*

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us mourne, and wait for the adoption of sonnes, the same Spirit that sanctifies a sinner, witnesses to his soule, that God is his. Worldlings grieve not for their absence from Christ, neither at all long they for his blessed appearing, because their heaven is here. They mourne not for the hidden distempers, and secret imperfections of their soules, whereas the godly are much in condemning themselves, for that which no creature can tax them of; Want of cōmunion with their Maker, straitnesse of spirit, distraction in dutie, that they cannot obey as they would; these exceedingly

ingly deject them, yet wait they will without despaire, till God have finished their course; there is such a divine power in *faith*, as a very little beam of it, having no other help than a naked promise, will uphold the soule against the greatest discouragements, and keepe it from utter sinking.

Indeed, *waiting* is a difficult duty, both in regard of the long day, which God usually takes before he performes his promise, as also by reason of the untowardnesse of our natures, being ready to be put off by the least frown, did not God by a Spirit of constancie preserve the

K 3 soule

soule immoveable in all conditions, whether present or to come, so as it failes not before him; and why? because it knowes full well, that God in whom it rests, is unchangably good.

Alas, we are at the best but light and vaine creatures, till the divine Spirit fix and settle us: the firmer our Union is here, the surer will be our standing in all danger; for what can daunt that soul, which in the greatest troubles hath made the great good to bee his owne? Such a person dares chearefully encounter any opposition, as having a Spirit higher than the world about him:

him; and seeing all (but God) farre beneath him; Though I might name more, what a many sweet evidences are here to manifest a soule truly acted, and led by the Spirit of God?

How may a man obtaine this blessed guest to lodge in his soule and rule over him?

Quest.

First, attend upon the teaching of the Gospell. *Received ye the Spirit, by the hearing of the Law, or of faith preached?* saith the Apostle; The Spirit is usually given, with a cleare unfolding of Christ.

Ans.

1

Secondly, omit likewise no meanes wherein the Spirit is effectually, for

2

as a man walking in a Garden (though he think not of it) drawes a sweet sent of the flowers. So the word of God being dictated by the Spirit, leaves a heavenly savour in such as converse with it. The spirit of a man is like water that runnes through Mineralls. Wee see Baths have their warmth from Mineralls that they runne thorough. So it is with the soule in its holy imployments. When it hath to deale with good books and good company, it draweth a spirituall tincture from these things, and is bettered by them.

3

Withall, take heed that thou grieve not the holy Ghost,

Ghost, for that will cause an estrangement of his presence in thy soule.

How is that done?

By cherishing contrary affections and lusts to his blessed motions, as when we heare the Word, but resolve never to obey it; When God knocks at our hearts for entrance, oh how readily should wee set open those everlasting doores to receive him? If Christ be willing to give us his Spirit, it must needs be our owne fault if wee remain carnall. There being nothing in a manner required to bee spirituall, but not to resist the Spirit; What greater indignity can we offer to the blessed

Quest.

Answ.

How the Spirit is grieved.

as a man walking in a Garden (though he think not of it) drawes a sweet sent of the flowers. So the word of God being dictated by the Spirit, leaves a heavenly savour in such as converse with it. The spirit of a man is like water that runnes through Mineralls. Wee see Baths have their warmth from Mineralls that they runne thorough. So it is with the soule in its holy imployments. When it hath to deale with good books and good company, it draweth a spirituall tincture from these things, and is bettered by them.

3

Withall, take heed that thou *grieve not the holy Ghost,*

Ghost, for that will cause an estrangement of his presence in thy soule.

How is that done ?

By cherishing contrary affections and lusts to his blessed motions, as when we heare the Word, but resolve never to obey it; When God knocks at our hearts for entrance, oh how readily should wee set open those everlasting doores to receive him? If Christ be willing to give us his Spirit, it must needs be our owne fault if wee remain carnall. There being nothing in a manner required to bee spirituall, but not to resist the Spirit; What greater indignity can we offer to the blessed

Quest.

Answ.

How the Spirit is grieved.

K 5 Com-

✕
8
Comforter, than to preferre our base lusts before his motions, leading to happineſſe? What greater unkindneſſe can a man doe his friend, than to ſlight his loving direction, and embrace the counſell of a profeſſed enemy? The Holy Ghoſt preſſes ſuch forcible reaſons upon us of heavenly mindedneſſe, and deſpiſing earthly things, that it is more than evident, none are damned in the boſome of the *Church*, but thoſe that ſet a bar againſt the Spirit of God in their hearts; ſuch are damned, becauſe they will bee damned, that (ſay the Preacher what hee

hee will) think it better
to bee as they are , than
to entertaine such a guest
as will marre , and a'-
ter all that was there be-
fore.

Take heed therefore of
resisting the Spirit in the
least kind , sad not his
blessed motions, but make
much of the same by
yeelding subjection there-
unto ; lay thy soule of-
ten before the spirit , suf-
fer thy selfe to be moul-
ded and fashioned by his
gracious working ; Oh
consider how high the
sighting of a gracious
motion reaches , even to
the contemning of God
himselſe ; certainly as we
use these, so would we use
the

the Spirit himselfe were
he visible to us.

And converse not with
carnall company, for what
wilt thou gaine there but
sorrow to thine heart, if
thou belondest to God:
and as holy *Lot* vex thy
righteous soule with the
uncleane conversation of
these *Sodomites*, it is an
undoubted signe of a man
destitute of grace, not to
care at all what company
he frequents.

Fourthly, seeing the
Holy Ghost is promised
to them that aske it, beg
earnestly for it at Gods
hands; this is the *good
thing* that G O D gives.
Christ seemes to insinu-
ate as much, saying, What
can

can I give you better than the Holy Ghost? Yet *this will I bestow on them that ask it*: for indeed that is the seed of all grace and comfort. A world of promises are included in the promise of giving the Spirit.

Labour therefore above all gettings to obtaine this high prerogative: the comforts of the Spirit are above al earthly comfort, and the graces of the Spirit enable to incounter the greatest tentations whatsoever. A man that hath this, stands impregnable. God may withdraw his favour for a time to humble us, but to quench the worke of the Spirit
(once

(once wrought in the soule) all the power of all the Devils in Hell cannot stirre it. This will carry us through all oppositions and difficulties in our Christian race. Let a man never baulk or decline a good cause for any thing that hee shall suffer: for the seale and earnest of the Spirit is never more strong than when we are deprived of all other comforts save that alone.

What makes a man differ from himself and frō other men, but this? Take a Christian that hath the *earnest of the Spirit*, you shall have him defie *Death, Satan, the World*, and all: take another that is carelesse

lesse to increase his *earnest*, how weak and feeble will you finde him, ready to be overcome by every temptation, and sinck under the least burthen.

The Apostle *Peter* before the Holy Ghost came upon him, was astonished with the voice of a weak *Damosell*, but after, how forward was he to suffer any thing.

Labour not then to bee strengthened in things below, neither value thy selfe by outward dependances. Alas all things here are perishing. If thou hast grace, thou hast that which will stand by thee when these faile, the Comforter shal never be

be taken away. What are all friends in the world to the Holy Ghost? This will speake to God for us when no creature dares looke him in the face. The Spirit will make requests with sighes and groanes in our behalfe, and wee may be sure we shall bee heard, when that intercedes for us. What Prison can shut up the Spirit of God? Oh gaine this what ever thou lovest, prefferre it to thy chiefe treasure. The very earnest of the Spirit is far more pretious, than the creatures full quintessence. If the Promises layd hold on by faith, quicken and cheare the soule, what shall the accomplish-

accomplishment of them doe? If the giving a taste of Heaven so lift our souls above all earthly discouragements, how glorious shall we shine forth, when the Spirit shall be all in all in us? This will make us more or lesse fruitfull, more or lesse glorious in our profession, and resolute in obedience through our whole course.

If we want this we can never be thankfull for any thing, for it is the love of God that sweetens every mercy to us, (and indeed is more to be valued than any blessing we enjoy besides) which if we eye not or are ignorant of, what can we expect but wrath
and

and displeasure in all that befalls us? Oh it is sweet to see favours and benefits issuing from grace and love: they doe not alwayes proove mercies which men oft times esteeme to be so. We can have no sollid comfort in any condition, further than God smiles upon us in it. What a fearefull case must that then be, wherein a man cannot be thankful for what he hath.

Every condition and place we are in, should indeed be a witnesse of our thankfulness to God; we must not think life was given onely to live in. Our life should not be the end of it selfe, but the praise
of

of the giver thereof. It is but fit that we should refer all that is good to his glory, who hath joyned his glory to our best good, in being glorified in our salvation, which while we question and doubt of, it is impossible ever to bee cheerfull towards him.

Besides, how can a man suffer willingly, that knowes not that God hath begun any good work in him? How lumpsish and dead is he under the crosse without this assurance? It is worth the considering, to see two men of equall parts under the same affliction, how quietly and calmly the one that hath interest in
Christ

Christ will beare his grievances, whereas the other rages as a foole, and is more beaten. A man will endure any thing comfortably when he considers it proceeds from his Fathers good pleasure. This breeds a holy resigning of our selves to God in al estates; as *Eli*, the wil of the Lord be done; his will is a wise will, and ever conduceth to his peoples good.

Fearest thou danger,
cry unto God, I am thine,
Lord save me; I am the
price of thy Sons blood,
let me not be lost, thou
hast given me the earnest
of thy Spirit, and set thy
seale upon me for thine
owne, let mee neither
lose

lose my bargain nor thou
thine.

Hence it is, that Gods
childe can so easily deny
himselfe in tentations and
allurements which others
sinck under. Oh saith he,
the Holy Ghost hath sea-
led me up to the day of re-
demption, shall I grieve
and quench the same for
this base lust? It is a great
disparagement to preferre
husks before the provision
of our Fathers House :
when we give content to
Sathan and a wretched
heart, wee put the Ho-
ly Ghost out of his Of-
fice.

Againe, without this
we can never comforta-
bly depart this life : hee
that

that hath the earnest of the Spirit in his heart, may laugh Sathan in the face and rejoyce at deaths approaching, as knowing there will be an accomplishment *then* of all the bargaine; then the Marriage will bee perfectly consummate, then shall be the great yeare of *Jubilee*, the Sabbath of rest for ever: hee that lives much by faith will finde it no hard matter to die in it. But let a man stagger and doubt whether hee belong to God or no, what a miserable case will he be in at the time of dissolution? Death (with the eternity of torment after it) who can looke it in the face

face without the assurance
of a happy change? This
makes men that see no
greater pleasure than the
following of their lusts,
resolve of swimming in
worldly delights still. Alas
say they, I had as good
take this pleasure as have
none at all: what
shall become of me
hereafter, who
knowes?

FINIS.

FINIS.



THE PRIVI-
LEDGES OF THE
FAITHFULL.

ROM. 8. 28.

*Also wee know that all
things work together for
the best to them that love
God, even to them that
are called of his purpose.*



Here are three
things especi-
ally that trou-
ble the life of
a Christian, or at least
should trouble the same.

The first whereof is *sin*,

L

with

with the guilt and punishment thereof.

2

The second, is, the *corruption of Nature*, which still abides in him, even after his vocation and conversion to Christ.

3

The third, is, the *miseries and crosses of this life*, which doe follow and ensue both upon *sinne*, and the evill thereof, as also by reason of that *corruption of Nature* still remaining in him, after his recovered estate in grace.

For the first, The *guilt of sinne*, which doth bind men over to death and damnation, that is forgiven to all beleivers in Christ Jesus the *second Adam*.

The second, which is
the

the corruption of Nature,
which cleaves so fast to
us, that is daily mortified
and crucified in the Saints
by the Word and Spirit of
God.

For the third, which is
the grievous crosses and
afflictions, which doe ac-
company and follow the
guilt of sinne and the cor-
ruption of nature still re-
maining in Gods children,
however they are not ta-
ken away, yet they are
made to have an excel-
lent issue, *For all things*
work together for the best
unto them that love God:
So that these words of the
Apostle do afford us.

1. A ground of Patience.

2. A ground of Comfort

In the former part of this Chapter, the Apostle had told us, *That we know not how to pray as we ought, but that the Spirit it self doth teach us how to pray, and makes requests for us with sighes that cannot be expressed.* And therefore how ever our corruptions and miseries in this life, are not quite taken away, yet the *evill* of those evils is removed: God teaching and directing us by his Spirit, to seek by prayer unto him, for grace to profit by them. And this is the co-hERENCE of these words with the former.

Parts of
the Text.

The parts here to be handled may be these.

An excellent prerogative.

tive. All things work together for the best.

Secondly, the persons to whom this prerogative belongs. *To them that love God, and whom hee doth call.*

Thirdly, the main cause of this blessed Prerogative.

Those that love God have this priviledge, belonging to them, because they are effectually called by his Word, according to his purpose. We know (saith the Apostle) that all things work together for the best to these; He doth not say, *We hope*, or *wee conjecture*, but *wee know it assuredly.*

∴ We have the Scriptures

Psal. 119.

of God for it, *David* saith, that *it was good for him that he was afflicted*, for therby he had learned to reform his wayes: hee knew by observation that all things would tend to his future happinesse. For hee had seen in the example of *Iob*, that notwithstanding his fore afflictions, yet he had a blessed issue out of all; he knew this many wayes, he knew it by *faith*, as also by *experience*, that every thing should further the Saints wel-being.

We know, that is, *we only* know it, who are led and *taught of God*, and none but *wee* can be assured hereof, which excludes the wicked, who shall

shall never know any such thing; but what is it that Paul is confident of here? Namely, *that all things work together for the best, to them that love God.*

And this may serve to be a prevention of a question, which weak Christians might move in their troubles, and say, Never was any more afflicted than I am? Why, saith the Apostle, bee it so; yet neverthelesse all things whatsoever, all thy crosses, vexations, and tribulations, shall work together, and joyne issue; though they bee averse one to the other, and opposite to the good of Gods children, as Herod and Pilate were; yet

all things thus contrary notwithstanding, shall work for the best unto them; there is

1. A good of Quality.

2. A good of Estate.

Quest.

Now therefore what kind of Good is this the Apostle meaneth?

Answ.

He doth not here mean the naturall or civill good estate of them that love God, but their spirituall condition in grace, and their glorious estate for the life to come; for the furthering whereof, whatsoever befalls them in this life, shall help forward still.

And thus much for the words themselves.

Doct.

The first point to be spoken

spoken of, is, The excellent priviledge of Gods children, *That all things shall work together for the best*; both good and evill shall turne to their happinesse. The reason stands thus; All things shal work together for the best to them that *love God*. Therefore all afflictions, crosses, and vexations, whatsoever that betide such persons, shall work together for their good; and for this cause all Gods servants must learne patiently to beare, and cheerefully to undergoe, poverty, or riches, honour, or dishonour, in this world.

That all good things do work for the best to Gods

All good things.

L 5 ser-

I

God the
Father.

servants, is most apparent by daily prooffe and experience. To begin with the first chiefe good of all; which is God the Father, who is goodnesse it selfe, and unspeakably comfortable to all his: Doe not all Gods attributes conduce to our eternall welfare? Is hee not set forth in Scripture, under the sweet name of a *Father*; of a *Shield* and *Buckler*, of a *Tower of Defence*, of an *All-sufficient & Almighty God*, *just*, *wise*, *provident*, *mercifull*, full of boundlesse *compassion*, and all to support his poore creatures from failing before him?

As he is our *Father*, he is carefull of us above the
care

care of earthly parents to their children; As he is a *Shield*, so he shelters us from all wrongs; As he is *God Almighty, and All-sufficient*, so his power and bounty serve to sustaine us in this world; and reserve us for ever safe in the world to come; His *wisdom* makes us wise to prevent the pollicke plots of the Devill or wicked men; His *justice* and *providence*, they serve to defend us in our right; to provide for us in all our wants, and prevent the evils of the ungodly intended against us; His *power* is ours to keep us, his *providence*, to dispose all things for our advantage;
Every

Every thing in God shall co-work to provide and fore-see all good for us, and mercifully to impart and bestow whatsoever is behoovefull upon us; So that God being our Father, we have right and title to his love, mercy, power, justice, truth, faithfulness, providence, wisdom, and all-sufficiencie. All which shall ever work together for the best, to them that love his appearing.

2
God the
Sonne.

So for *Iesus Christ, the eternall Sonne of God*. All his glorious titles and attributes, serve likewise for the everlasting comfort of his poore Saints on earth: Hee is called the *Husband* of

*of his Church, to cherish
and maintaine the same.
His love unto his Church
is farre above the love of
any husband to his wife;
Hee is called the Saviour
of the World, because hee so
loved the world, that hee
gave his life for it, and
hath promised, that who so-
ever beleeveth on him, shall
not perish: He is called the
Fountaine of life, the Well
of life, the Water of life, the
Bread of life, the Way, the
Truth, and the Life, be-
cause that in him is our
life, and by him wee are
fed and nourished to eter-
nall life; here in him wee
obtain the life of Grace,
and in the World to
come, shall for ever en-
joy*

3
God the
Holy
Ghost.

joy the life of Glory.

So likewise for the *Holy Ghost*; what heavenly attributes are ascribed to him in the Scriptures? He is called *the Comforter* of Gods servants; *The Sealer of the Redemption* of Gods children in their hearts; he teacheth the *Elect* to call God Father; he beareth witnesse with their spirits, that they are the *Sons and Daughters of God*; he teacheth them to pray, as they ought, he fills them with peace that passeth all understanding; And refreshes their spirits with such unspeakable joy, as eye hath not seene, nor ear heard the like. He that is instructed by the Spirit, knoweth

eth the things of God,
which a naturall man is
ignorant of, The holy Ghost
doth call to remembrance
the doctrine of God taught
unto his servants, & writes
the same in their hearts;
so that the operations of
the blessed Spirit, are all
appropriated to them that
love God, and they alone
have their right in them;
The direction, comfort,
teaching, and guiding of
the Spirit of God, doe
serve entirely and peculi-
arly, to order and work
all things together for the
best to the Godly.

Yea, the Angels them-
selves are called Messen-
gers and ministring spirits,
appointed by God to at-
tend

4
Angells.

Pfal. 34.

tend and wait upon his servants, Hee gives his Angels charge over these, to serve them in all their wayes, and to pitch their tents round about them; whensoever God pleaseth to call any of his out of this world, the Angels are a safe conduct, to carry their soules into Abrahams bosome; And at the last judgement; the Lord shall send forth his Angels to gather his Elect, from one end of the world to the other, that they may fully enjoy that which they have long waited for, even eternall blisse and glory.

5
Magi-
strates.

Vnder the Angels all other creatures are likewise

wife made serviceable for his peoples good. *Princes* in authority, are called in Scripture *nursing Fathers* and *nursing Mothers* unto the Church of Christ: the end of all magistracy being, that we might live religiously and peaceably in all the wayes of God.

Ministers also are stiled in the Word by the names of *Watchmen* and *Seeds-men*, and *spirituall Fathers*, to beget men againe to the kingdome of Heaven; they are called *Gods Husbandmen* to manure and till his ground. They are called *Gods lights*, and *the Salt of the Earth*, both to enlighten the Church with the light of

6
Ministers.

of the glorious Gospel whereof they are *Ministers*: and to season them with such savoury and sweet instructions, as may make them wise to salvation; this being the very end of all *Gods* giving gifts to men, that they might build up the Church of Christ here below.

7
The
Word.

So also the Word of God is called the *savour of life, & the power of God unto salvation*: It is the *seed of God*, which being sown in the hearts of *Gods* children, springeth up in them to everlasting happiness: Gods Word is a *light* and a *Lanterne* to guide and direct us in all his wayes: it is the Sword
of

of the Spirit, to arme us
against sin, and to main-
taine us in grace.

The *Sacraments* like-
wise are the *Scales* of life,
and pledges of our salva-
tion in Christ: and *Ex-
communication* though it
bee rough, and the ex-
treamest censure of the
Church. (and therefore
ought to be undertaken
upon weighty grounds)
yet the end of it is, to save
the soules of Gods peo-
ple, and to make them by
repentance turne unto
him.

So all outward gifts, as
beauty, strength, riches and
honours; these are given by
God to serve for the good
of his children. As the
beauty

8
Sacra-
ments.

9
Outward
gifts.

beauty of *Hester* was an instrument of her preferment, whereby she became a preservation to Gods children, and an overthrow of her and their enemies: *Iosephs* outward honours and wealth were made by Gods disposing hand, a meanes of the preservation & nourishment of the *Israelites* in the time of their great extremity and famine: the like may be said of *learning* and other naturall acquirements, all which do often tend to generall and publike advantages.

10
Outward
gifts of
Reprobates.

Yea, the outward gifts of God which are bestowed upon reprobates, are still for the good of his:
for

for they who had skill and knowledge to build *Noahs Ark*, though they themselves were not saved therein, yet were they the meanes of *Noahs* preservation: and so it many times falleth out, that men of excellent parts and great abilities without grace, though themselves are not profited thereby, yet God so useth them as their gifts much conduce, to further and build up the Church of Christ.

Even outward favour of *Princes*, oft tend to Gods servants good. A just man (as the Heathens could say) is a common benefit. And so a true Christian

II
Favour of
Princes.

stian, whatsoever good he hath it is *communicable* to all the faithfull: and therefore S. Paul saith of himselfe, that *he was a debtor to all men*, both Iewes and Gentiles, and that *hee became all things to all men*, that he might win some.

But here the maine question will be, and the difficulty arises, how all ill things can work together for the best to Gods children? I shall therefore demonstrate,

1 The truth of this, *how it can be so?*

2 The reasons, *why it is so.*

3 Observe a *cantion*, that it be not abused.

4 Let us see the sweet

sweet and comfortable use
of this Doctrine.

That this may the bet-
ter appear, we must know
that all evill things are

either { 1 Spirituall evill
things.
2 Outward evill
things.

And for spirituall evill
things, they are either
First, Sinne. Secondly,
That which hath a refe-
rence to Sinne, as being
evils following after sinne.

The *first sin* of all which
hath gone over whole
mankinde, and is spread a-
broad in every one of us,
this by Gods mercy and
our repentance, prooves
to al beleivers a transcen-
dent good: for the fall and
sin

I
Sinne.

sin of the first *Adam*, caused the birth and death of the second *Adam*, Christ Jesus; who notwithstanding he was God, took upon him the nature of *man*, and hath made us by his comming, farre more happy than if we had never fallen: neither would God have suffered *Adam* to have fallen, but for his owne further glory, in the manifestation of his justice and mercy, and for the greater felicity of his servants in Christ their Mediatour.

2
Corruption of nature:

The next spirituall evill is, the *corruption of nature* remaining in all mankinde, howsoever broken and subdued in the Lords deare

deere ones, this worketh
for the best to them after
this manner. First it ser-
veth to make us see and
know we are kept by *God*,
how that we are not the
keepers of our owne
selves, *but are kept by his*
power through faith unto
salvation. For were it not
that God upholds and su-
staines us, our corrupti-
ons would soone overturn
us: but the sight of cor-
ruption being sanctified to
the soule, causeth us to
ground our comfort out
of our selves in Christ, and
no whit to rely on any
thing that is in us.

Our *corruptions* are al-
so good, to abase the pride
of our natures, and let us

M

see

see the naughtinesse of our spirits that we may be humbled before G O D. And it is good we should have something within us to make us weary of the world; else, when wee have run out our race, we shalbe unwilling to depart hence. Now our bondage to this naturall corruption serves exceedingly to make us mourne for our sinfull disposition, and hunger after our God to be joyned with him, as we see in S. Pauls example, *Rom. 17.* where finding the rebellion of his nature, and the strife that was in him, *the flesh* lusting against *the spirit*, and the *spirit* against *the flesh*, he
craves

cryes out, saying, *Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death,* and seeketh to God in Christ for mercy strait.

Sometimes God suffers corruption to break out of us, that we may know our selves the better: and because corruption is weakned, not only by smothering, but many times by having a vent, whereupon grace stirs up in the soule, a *fresh* hatred and revenge against it, and lets us see a necessity of having *whole* Christ; not only to pardon sinne, but to purge and cleanse our defiled natures. But yet that which is ill it selfe,

must not be done for the good that comes by it by accident; this must be a comfort after our surprisals, not an encouragement before.

It is our great consolation, that our nature is perfect in Christ, who hath taken our nature upon him, and satisfied Divine justice, not only for the sinne of our *lives*, but for the sin of our *natures*, who will finish his owne worke in us, and never give over, till by his Spirit he hath made *our* natures holy and pure as his *owne*; till he hath taken away, not only the reigne, but the very life and being of sinne out of our hearts.

To

To which end he leaves his *Spirit* and *truth* in the Church to the end of the world, that the seed of the *Spirit* may subdue the seed of the *Serpent* in us, and that the Spirit may be a never failing spring of all holy thoughts, desires, and endeavours, in us, and dry up the contrary issue and spring of corrupt nature.

Lastly, it is good that corruption should still remaine in us, that the glory of God may the more appeare, when as Satan that great and strong enemy of mankinde, shall be foiled and overturned by a weak and poore Christian, who is full of corruptions, and

M 3 that

that through the strength of faith, though mixed with much distrust: for a Christian in the state of sinne and corruption to overcome the great adversary of mankind, what a wonderment is it? It tendeth much to the shame and dishonour of that *fiery Dragon*, that weake and sinfull man should be his conquerour. Oh how it confounds him to think, that a graine of *Mustardseed* should bee stronger than the Gates of Hell, that it should be able to *remove Mountaines* of oppositions and temptations, cast up by Satan and our rebellious hearts betweene God and us. *Abi-*

meleck

meleck could not endure that it should be said, *a Woman had slaine him*: and it must needs be a torment to *Sathan*, that a weake Child, a decrepid old man, should by a spirit of *faith* put him to flight.

A third kinde of spirituall ill of sin, are the things that issue out of this cursed stock, and those are either *inward*, or *outward*. For inward sins, they are eithers *errours* or *doubtings*, or *pride*, or *wrath*, or such like.

And first for *doubtings* of the truth: this makes Gods servants often more resolute to seek and search out the same; and to stand afterwards more firme

3
Inward
and out-
ward
grosse sins

I -
Doubt-
ings,

and couragious for it. For if wee doubted not of things, we should not afterwards bee put out of doubt, nor seek to be better grounded and instructed in them. The *Corinthians* doubted once of the *Resurrection*, but were ever after better resolved in that Doctrine, the benefit whereof hath much redounded to the Churches good ever since. *Thomas* had the like wavering disposition, but this doubting more manifested the truth. *Luther* being a Monk at the first, and not fully grounded in the Doctrine of the Gospell, did therefore suspect himselfe the more, and wished all
men

men after him to reade his writings warily. The Doctrine of the *Trinity* hath formerly been much doubted of, and therefore hath bin with the greater paines and study of worthy men (then living in the Church) more evidently prooved. And when the *Pelagians* grew into Heresies, they were by S. *Augustine* gainesayd, and very strongly withstood. So the doctrine of the *Church of Rome*, being branched into divers erroneous opinions, and broached to the great hurt and prejudice of Christians, hath occasioned the truth of God against them to bee the more excellently cleered.

M s and

and made knowne. For when Religion is oppugned, it is time then to hold fast, as the Apostle S. Jude saith, *with both hands, the Word, and to fight for the faith*: that so wee may know both what to hold, and upon what ground we oppose Heresie.

2
Anger,
covetous-
nesse, &c.

Now for *inward finnes*, as *anger, covetousnesse, distrust*, and such like; these often proove advantageous to the Saints: their corruptions are a meanes of their humiliation: *Paul* and *Barabas* having a breach betweene them, were so exasperated, that they forsook each others company, by which means it came to passe, that the Church

Church was more instructed than before. And hence wee may see what the best men are in themselves. If *Luther* had had no infirmities, how would men have attributed to him above measure? as we see, they were ready to sacrifice to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, which shewes us, that even the distempers and weakneses of Gods servants, are disposed by Divine Providence to their eternall welfare.

Yea, God often suffereth his children, to fall into some outward grosse sinnes, that by meanes thereof they might bee humbled and abased, and in the end be cured of that provoking

3
Grosse
sinnes.

and made knowne. For when Religion is oppugned, it is time then to hold fast, as the Apostle S. Jude saith, *with both hands, the Word, and to fight for the faith*: that so wee may know both what to hold, and upon what ground we oppose Heresie.

2
Anger,
covetous-
nesse, &c.

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3
Grosse
sinnes.

4
Carnall
sinnes.

Gal. 6. 6.

provoking sinne of being proud in spirit.

The falling of Gods children doth much deject them and bring them upon their knees with shame. It makes them gentle and meek in the reprehension of their brethren; for having slipped out of the way themselves, and being by repentance recovered, they learne to *restore others with the spirit of meeknesse*, as the Apostle speakes. A man humbled by experience of sinne in himselfe, will soone relent at the fall of others. Those often times prove the most excellent instruments in the Church who have formerly beene overtaken

overtaken with some grosse sinne, by meanes whereof they have ever after beene much abased in their owne eyes.

We see *David*, *Paul*, and *Peter*, fell grievously, but being afterwards raised againe, and finding comfort themselves, they were a great meanes of strengthning others: for he which teacheth out of his owne experience and feeling, is the fittest and best teacher of all. So it was with *Ionah*, when by casting him into the *Sea*, God had humbled him, he was fit to preach repentance to *Niniveh*. This is a most certaine truth, that never any of Gods elect
fell

fell grievously, but he was the better all the dayes of his life for his fall. *David* having beene thorowly humbled for sinne, when *Shimei* his subject cursed him to his face, how patiently did hee beare the same? So *Peter* having denied his *Master*, and afterwards recovering himself again, we see how zealous he was for his *Lord Christ*, & suffered death for him.

5
Sins of
others of
Gods
children.

Furthermore, not only the sins of Gods children which they themselves commit, do work for their best, but also the finnes of others of the Saints, with whom they converse and live, doe much tend to their good and welfare.

Do

Do not the fals of *David*,
Peter, *Manasses*, and *Paul*,
comfort the distressed and
despairing soules of such
as languish, and are ready
to faint under the burthen
of their sins? And do not
the registry of their sins
in Scripture, give hope to
us that God will be mer-
cifull to our sins also: we
may not think it is Gods
will, to set upon perpe-
tuall Record, the sinnes
of his servants for their
shame, disgrace, and pu-
nishment, but for our
comfort, who live and re-
maine to the end of the
world. And the faults of
the Saints have two ex-
cellent uses, whereof the
one is for *comfort*, the
other

other for *instruction*.

Use.

The use in regard of comfort, is this: God hath shewed mercy to *David*, *Paul*, *Peter*, and others, sinning grievously against him, and repenting of the same; Therefore if I also shall sinne, and truly repent as they did, surely God is where he was, as full of mercy and readinesse to forgive, *now* as ever.

Use.

The second use for instruction is this: If such excellent and eminent Saints by sinne have fallen grievously? how then much more are we poore weak soules subject to fall, if wee neglect watchfulnessse over our selves? If a
weak

weak Christian oft assaulted with tentations, should not see the falls & slips of Gods worthier servants, he would be in a wonderfull desperation, and cry out of himselfe, saying, Alas, what shall I doe, never was any so assaulted and tempted, so cast downe, and overcome in temptations as I am; and therefore my case is more fearefull, and worse than ever was any; But when hee considereth the grievous falls of Gods speciall servants, how they have stepped aside foulely, and yet obtained mercy; by their examples hee beginneth to be revived, and receive inward comfort; whereby

other for *instruction*.

Vse.

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Irregular
Pagination

Vse.

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efore my case is more
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servants, how they have
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yet obtained mercy; by
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neth to be revived, and re-
ceive inward comfort;
whereby

wherby it is evident, that all finnes whatsoever of Gods Elect, as vile and as loathsome as they are, doe by Gods providence, and our owne serious repentance turne to their good, and the good of those with whom they live.

4
Deserti-
ons.

The next spirituall Evill, is that which followeth after sinne committed, viz. *Gods desertion*, or forsaking of us, when he seemes to hide his favour from men, after they have sinned against him; when God manifests himselfe as an enemy to his people, this grieves them more than any thing else in the world beside; wee see *David* how hee calls
upon

upon God, not to *rebuke*
him in his wrath, nor for-
sake him in his displeasure,
where hee sheweth how
grievously he was afflicted
with the anger of the Al-
mighty.

Psal. 6.

But albeit that God
doth seeme sometimes to
forsake his servants, it is
not for their confusion,
but for their consolation;
for by this meanes they
come to be poore in spi-
rit, and wonderfully emp-
tied of themselves. And it
is very observable, that
when such as are thorow-
ly wounded, and afflicted
inwardly, come to reco-
ver strength and peace
again, they often prove
the most comfortable Chri-
stians

stians of all others ; walking with more care to avoid offence all their lives after.

Christ Jesus himselfe, though hee never sinned, but onely stood (as a surety) in our roome to pay the ransome of our debts, seemed to be forsaken of God his Father, and because hee was thus thus humbled, therefore hee was after most highly exalted above all, both in heaven and in earth. So *Iob* seemed to be forsaken, and doth grievously be-moane his miseries, but this was not because hee had sinned against God, more grievously than others had done, but for the
the

the *triall* of his faith and patience, to give him experience of Gods love to him in the crosse, that he might cleave the closer to his Maker all his time after.

Another Evill arising from the guiltinesse of sin, is *anguish of mind*, and a *wounded spirit*, which (saith Salomon) *who can beare?* But for all this, grieve for sinne, is an happy grieve; yea, a grieve never to bee grieved for. This *wound* in spirit breedeth afterwards a *sound* spirit; Repentance is good, & Faith in Christ is good; But what doth prepare us to these happy graces? Is it not a wounded spirit? Who

5
Wounded
Spirit.

Who would ever repent of his finnes, and lay hold on Christ for remission of the same, if hee were not pricked and pierced in the sence thereof; Christ professeth himselfe to bee a *Physitian*; but to whom? *To the lost Sheepe of Israel.* He promiseth ease and refreshment, but to whom? *To them that are weary, and laden with the burthen of their finnes; The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, that he might preach the Gospel to the poore, and hee was sent to heale the broken hearted, that hee might preach deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and set at liberty them that are bruised.* Againe.

Luke 4.1.

Againe, divers Christians doe walk very heavily and uncomfortably, by reason of inward tentations, & blasphemous imaginations, which oft are suggested, & enter into their minds; but these finnes which so vex the soules of poore Christians, are a meanes of their humiliation, causing them to sue more earnestly to God for pardon. And these sinfull corruptions doe further serve for a testimony to themselves, that they are not under the power of Sathan, but live in the Kingdome of grace; for if they were captived to the Devill, and under his government, then would he never

6

Blasphemous
thoughts.

never molest & vex them, but suffer them quietly to live and die in their sins, but because they are from under his rule and jurisdiction, therefore hee perplexeth & troubleth them all he can: By which it is evident, that all sinnes by Gods mercy and our repentance, do work together for the best untous.

7
Continu-
ance in
sinne.

Yea, the circumstances of sin as *continuance* therein, which much aggravates the sinne; when such a one truly repents, and is restored to Christ, it maketh him more zealous, and watchfull ever after; as wee see in *Paul*, and the *Thiefe* on the Crosse, who finding favour, acknowledgeth

ledgeth his worthinesse of punishment, reprehendeth his fellow on the Crosse, & justifieth Christ to have done all things well, and so giving glory unto God, and crying for mercy, receiveth a comfortable promise of an heavenly Kingdome. All things are possible to God. We can never be so ill, as he is powerfull and good, God can bring contrary out of contrary. He hath promised to poure cleane water upon us, which *faith* sues out, and remembers, that Christ hath taken upon him to purge his *Spouse*, and make her fit for himselfe.

Further, the very re.

N

lapses

lapses and *back-slidings* of Gods servants into sinne, doe not argue no repentance, but a weak repentance, and therefore when they are againe rebuked and turned from sin, their *relapses* doe make them set upon the service of God more strongly, and runne more constantly in his wayes. Where true grace is, sinne looses strength, by every new fall; for hence issues deeper humility, stronger hatred of evill, fresh indignation against our selves, more experience of the deceitfulnesse of our hearts, and renewed resolutions till sinne bee brought under. *Adam* lost all by *once* sinning, but we are

are under a better covenant (a covenant of mercy) and are encouraged to go to God every day, for the sins of that day.

For it is not with God as it is with men, who being offended will scarce be reconciled, but God offended still offereth mercy. He is not only ready to receive us when we returne, but perswades, and intreates us to come unto him : yea, after *back-sliding* and false dealing with him, wherein he allows no mercy to be shewed by man, yet he will take liberty to shew mercy himselfe, as in *Jeremiah*, *If a man have an adulterous Wife, and shall put*

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N 2 *her*

her away, and shee become another mans, he will not receive her anymore to him. But saith the Lord, thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet turne againe unto mee, for I am mercifull, and my wrath shall not fall upon you: I will not alwayes keepe mine anger, though your sinnes be as Crimson, they shall bee white as Snow, and though they were red like Skarlet, they shall bee as white as Wooll; if yee will turne to me, and wash ye, and make ye cleane, and cease to doe evill, and learne to do well. So Revel. 2. Christ speaking to the Church of Ephe-sus, saith, She hath fallen from her first love, but saith
he

he, Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and doe thy first works, and I will receive thee to favour; by which wee see, that the relapses of Gods elect, as they doe not finally hinder mercy from their soules, so notwithstanding the same, they are still encouraged to return to God, to renew their covenant by faith and repentance, and cleave more strongly to him.

As for *outward evils*, they are, First, evils of *estate*, as *want* and *poverty*, which oft falls out to be the portion of Gods children, yet are they not any whit the worse hereby, but rather the better in

8
Outward
evils.

their inner man: for the lesse they have in this world, the greater and larger happinesse shall they partake of in another world. What they lose one way, is supplied another. Whatsoever comfort we have in goods or friends below, it is all conveyed from God above, who still remaines, though these be taken away. The Saints see, that if to preserve the deereſt thing in the world, they break with God, he can make it a dead contentment, and a torment to them: whereas if we care to preserve communion with God, we shall be ſure to finde in him, whatsoever we deny
for

for him, *honour, riches, pleasures, friends*, all; so much the sweeter, by how much we have them more immediately from the Spring-head. Our *riches, and friends, and life* it selfe may soon depart. But God never loseth his right in us, nor we our interest in him. Every thing beneath, teaches us by the vanity and vexation we finde in them, that our happinesse is not there; they send us to God, they may make us worse, but better they cannot: our nature is above them, and ordained for a greater good: they can but go along with us for a while, and their end swallowes up all the com-

fort of their beginning.

Besides, none have that experience of Gods goodnesse and faithfulnessse, as those that are in want and misery: God in his wisdom foreseeing what is best for his servants, knowes, that the more worldly wealth they doe abound in, the lesse their estimation would be of heavenly things: he sees how apt the poore creature is to be carried away with present comfort, and to have his love drawne to the world from better contentments. The poorer they are in worldly riches, the more they seek to bee rich in grace, in *knowledge, faith, and repentance,*

penitance, which heavenly treasures incomparably surmount the most transcendent excellency w^{ch} the creature can yeeld.

As for the evill of losing a *good name*, a thing oft befalling the children of God, to be slandered and evill spoken of. They upon every small disgrace take occasion to enter into themselves and try, whether they be guilty of such hard imputations as are flung upon them.

And if upon a serious consideration hee finde himself disgraced for good things, he weares it as a Crowne, and as a Garland upon his head, *Rejoycing that he is accounted*

N 5 *worthy*

9
Slanders.

worthy to suffer for the Lord Iesus, esteeming the rebukes of Christ greater treasure than the riches of Egypt. A true beleever resignes his good name, and all that hee hath to God. He is assured that no man can take away that from him, which God will give him, and keepe for him. It is not in mans power to make others conceive what they please of us.

TO
Evils of
body.

For the evils of Body, such as *sicknesse*, and *diseases* of all sorts, which daily attend our houses of Clay : God by meanes hereof acquaints his children with their fraile condition, and shewes them
what

what a little time they have to provide for eternity, thereby driving them to search their evidences, & to make all straight betwixt him and them: outward weakneses are oft a meanes to restraîne men from inward evils. God usually sanctifies the pains and griefs of his servants to make them better. The time of sicknesse is a time of purging from that defilement we gathered in our health. We should not be cast down so much for any bodily distemper, as for *sinne*, that procures and invenomes the same. That is a good sicknesse which tends to the health of the soule: *Naaman the Assyrian*

Assyrian, if he had not had a leprousie in his body had continued a Leper, both in body and soule all his dayes : his outward grievances made him inwardly sound. The very *heathen* could say, that we are then best in soule when we are weakeft in body, for then we are most in heavenly resolutions, and seeking after God. Yea then it appeares what good proficients we have beene in time of health. Oh how happy were our conditions, if we were as good when wee are well and in health, as we usually are when we are sick and ill.

II
Death,

Even *death* it self which

is

is the end of all, though it be fearefull and irksome to nature, yet it is to Gods servants a bed of Downe, easing them of all their miseries and putting them in possession of an heavenly kingdome, therefore saith *Solomon*, *the day of death is better than the day of birth.* God will be the God of his, not only unto death, but in death: Death is the death of it selfe, and not of us; it is a disarmed and conquered enemy to all the faithfull: for which cause *S. Paul* desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ, which is best of all. *Death*, albeit it seemes terrible and dreadfull, yet the *sting* thereof being taken

ken away (by the death of Christ) it brings everlasting joy along with it; and is only as a Groom-Porter to let us in to a stately Pallace. Whether tend all the troubles we meet with in this world? but only to fit us for a better condition hereafter, and to assure the soule that when earth can hold it no longer, Heaven shall.

12
Death of
friends.

Yea, when friends forsake us, and are false unto us, *God is a sure helpe in time of need*, he is our refuge from one generation to another; do we not see that in the decay of worldly comforts, God then manifests himselfe most comfortably to his people:

ple: doth he not sti'e him-
 selfe the *Comforter of the*
comfortlesse, and the helpe
of them that are in distresse;
 and doe not *with him the*
fatherlesse finde mercy; if
 men were more father-
 lesse they would find more
 mercy at Gods hands. As
 Christ makes us al to him,
 so should we make him *all*
in all to our selves. If all
 comforts in the world
 were dead, we have them
 still in the living Lord.
 How many *friends* have
 we in him alone? who ra-
 ther than we shall want
 friends, can make our ene-
 mies our friends. Thus it
 appeares that all miseries
 are a triall of us to God,
 and to the world, what we
 are

are ; they are a cure of sin
past, and a preparation to
endure further crosses,
they have many excellent
uses and ends, and all for
the best to Gods servants.

Afflictions

It is good we should be
exercised with present
crosses, to put us in minde
of the evils we have done
long agoe, that so we may
repent of them : *Iosephs*
brethren being afflicted
and imprisoned, called to
minde how hardly they
had dealt with their *bro-*
ther long before. It should
be our wisdom while we
remain here, to consider
our warfaring condition,
how we are daily inviro-
ned with enemies, and
therefore ought to stand
continu-

continually upon our guard against Satan, and the Powers of darknesse, and as Pilgrims and Strangers go on in our journey to Heaven: not starting at the barking of every Dog, nor intangling our selves in worldly things whereby we should be stopped in our way.

It is for our best not to bee condemned with the world. Afflictions serve for this very end, to make us more prize God, & deny the creature with all its excellencies: are our crosses great here? let us not be daunted, but beare them patiently, our comfort shall be the greater afterwards. It is not only
good

good for us , that wee should *have* crosses , but that they should be *continued* upon us , that wee may the better know our selves ; If all were well with a man wounded, and the sore clean healed, the plaister would fall off it selfe ; So, were wee thoroughly cured of our spirituall wants , and in a continuall resistance of every evill way : These afflictions which are the plaisters of our soules, would soone cease and leave us.

14
Devil and
Hereticks.

Furthermore , Sathan himselfe and all his instruments, when they most set themselves against Gods people , and seek their overthrow, then are they
work-

working their chief good,
The Devill when hee
thought to make an end
of Christ by putting him
to death, even then, by
that very thing, was van-
quished himselfe, and the
Church of God fully ran-
somed from hell and dam-
nation; God suffers many
heretiques to be in the
world, but why? not that
the truth should be held
in darknesse, but that it
might thereby bee more
manifested and knowne.
It is Sathans continuall
trade, to seeke his rest in
our disquiet. When hee
sees men will to heaven,
and that they have good
title to it, then he followes
them with all tentations
and

and discomforts that hee can. Hee cannot endure that a creature of meaner rank than himselfe, should enjoy a happinesse beyond him; but our comfort is, that Christ was tempted, that hee might succour all poore soules in the like case. Wee are kept by *his power through faith unto salvation.*

Causes
why all
things
work to-
gether for
the best.

Now the causes why all things doe work together for the best to them that love God, are these, *viz.*

1. It is Gods *Decree.*
2. It is Gods *manner of working.*
3. It is Gods *blessed Covenant.*
4. It is the *foundation*
of

of the covenant,
Christ Iesus.

Gods decree and purpose is, of bringing all his Elect unto eternall salvation, and therefore all things in heaven and earth must conduce to bring his servants unto glory. The reason is this, God is infinitely wise, and infinitely *strong, provident, and good*, therefore by his infinite wisdom, power, providence, and mercie, hee turneth all things to the best for *his*; whatsoever is in heaven, earth, or hell, is ordered by God; neither is there any thing without him; therefore nothing can hinder his *Decree*; Sathan himselfe with

I
Gods Decree.

with all his instruments, yea the worst of creatures, all must serve Gods purpose contrary to their natures, for the good of his children ; The Prophet saith, *God hath commanded salvation, and he hath commanded deliverance to Iacob* ; When God hath determined to save any man, all things must needs serve him, that over-rules all things. As it was said of Christ when he *stilled the Seas*, *Who is this that the very wind and Seas obey him ?* God commanded the *Whale* to serve at his beck to save *Jonah*, and it obeyed. All creatures in the earth are at his disposing, and serve to accomplish

plish his pleasure.

The second cause why all works together for the best to beleevers ; Is *the manner of God working* in things, which is by *contraries* ; he bringeth light out of darknesse, glory out of shame, and life out of death ; Wee fell by pride to hell and destruction, and must be restored by humiliation to life and salvation ; Christ humbled himselfe being *God*, to become *man* for us ; and by his death restored us to life ; When our sinnes had brought us to greatest extremities, even then were we nearest to eternal happiness. Therefore saith the Apottle, *When wee are weak,*

2

Gods manner of working.

weak, then are we strong in the Lord. When wee are abased, then are wee readiest to be exalted; when we are poore, then are we most rich; and when we are dead, then doe wee live: For God worketh all by contraries, hee lets men see his greatnesse and his goodnesse, that so they may admire his works, and give more glory to him; he worketh without means, and above meanes, and against meanes; out of misery hee bringeth happinesse, and by hell bringeth men to heaven. Which as it manifesteth Gods glory to his creatures, so it serveth for the confusi-on of mans pride, that hee
may

may discern he is nothing in himselfe, but is all that he is in the Lord.

The third cause why all things work for the best to them that feare God, Is *Gods covenant* with his Church; when once this gracious covenant is made, that *hee will be their God, and they shall be his people*: that he will *bee their Father and Protector*, must not all things then needs serve for their good? When as God tells *Abraham, I am thy God. All-sufficient, only walk before me, & be thou perfect*: Doth not this engage him to set his power & mercy, his wisdom, and providence, *all on work for*
O the

3
Gods co-
venant.

the happy estate of *Abraham*? When once God by his promise is become *our* God, there is a covenant betwixt us and the creatures, yea, and the stones in the street, that nothing shall wrong us, but all conduce to our good. The Angels are ours, their service is for our protection, safety, & welfare; Heaven and earth is ours, and all things in them for our behoofe; *Christ himselfe*, and, together with him, *all things else* are become *ours*; in him we are heires of all. What a wondrous comfort is this, that God hath put himselfe over to be *ours*? whom to enjoy, is to possesse all things, and

to want, is misery unexpressable. Had we all the world without God, it would prove a curse, and no blessing to us: whereas if we have *nothing*, and enjoy God, we have happiness it selfe for our portion. If we have no better portion here than these things, wee are like to have hell for our portion hereafter. Let God be in any condition though never so ill, yet it is comfortable. He is goodnesse it selfe. And indeed, nothing is so much a Christians, as God is *his*, because by his being ours in covenant, all other things become *ours*, and therefore they cannot but co-

operate for our good.

When thou art in the fire, and water, I am with thee, saith God: And Thou art my Buckler, my Glory, and Shield, therefore I will not be afraid, though ten thousand of people shall beset me round about, saith David, for salvation belongeth unto the Lord. And if God be on our side, who can bee against us? If God justifie us, who shall condemne us? Can any thing hurt us, when hee is become our loving Father? Neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor principalities, nor powers, nor any thing whatsoever, can separate us from his love toward us.

A fourth

A fourth ground, why all things fall out for the best to the Saints, is: The *foundation* of this covenant of God with his Church, which is *Christ Iesus*, who by his blood hath purchased our peace, hee being God became man, and is the sole Author of all our comfort; Without *Christ God is a consuming fire*; but in him a most *loving Father*, and ever well pleased. God promiserh in *Christ his Sonne to marry his people unto himselfe for ever*, Yea (saith he) *I will marry thee unto me in righteousness and in judgement; and in mercie, and everlasting cōpassion*. Now upon this blessed contract

O 3 made

made in Christ to his Church ; what followeth ? *In that day* (saith the Lord) *I will heare the heavens, and they shall heare the earth, and the earth shall heare the Corne, and the Wine, and the Oyle, and they shall heare Israel, and I will have mercy upon her, that was not pittied; And I will say unto them which were not my people; thou art my people, And they shall say, thou art my God.*

Where wee see, what is the reason of all their happinesse, even this, that God will marry them to himselfe. So that this marriage worketh all our blisse ; our conjunction with Christ, and reconciliation

liation through his death,
is the cause of all our
comfort, in *him* wee have
the *adoption* of Sonnes.
Hence it is, that we are at
peace with God, and have
freedom from all harmes.
Christ in his greatest re-
proach, and deepest humili-
ation, had his greatest
triumph and exaltation;
In his death on the Crosse
he vanquished Death, and
entred into eternall life:
When Christ came into
the world, and took upon
him our nature, even then
the greatest Monarch in
the world, *Augustus Cæ-*
sar, was at his command,
whom he so ordered, as
that by his causing all
the world to bee taxed,

O 4 Christ

Christ was manifested to be borne at *Bethlehem* in *Iury*.

How commeth it to passe, that death which is fearefull in it selfe, cannot hurt us? The reason is, *Death is swallowed up in victory* by his death. It is Christ that sanctifieth all crosses, afflictions, and disgraces to the Saints advantage. The evill of them all is taken away by him, and turned to his peoples good. How commeth it to passe that the Law cannot hurt us, which pronounceth a curse against every one, that abideth not in all things written therein, to do them? The reason is, *Christ was made*

a curse for us, he was made under the Law, that hee might redeeme us who were under the Law: and thus is Christ a meritorious and deserving cause of procuring all good to us, and removing all ill from us.

He doth not only overcome evill for us, but also overcommeth evill in us, and gives us his Spirit, which unites us to himselfe; whereby wee have ground to expect good out of every ill, as knowing, that whatsoever Christ wrought for the good of mankinde, he did it for us in particular.

In *Outward favours*, grace makes us acknow-

O s ledge

ledge all the blessings wee have to be the free gifts of God, and invites us to returne the glory to him.

Gods servants take all occasions and opportunities of doing good by those gifts and abilities wherewith they are endowed. When *Hester* was advanced to great honor, *Mordechai* told her, that God had conferred that dignity upon her for his peoples welfare, that she might be a means of their safety. Whereas on the contrary, a proud heart destitute of the Spirit of Christ, ascribes all to it selfe, waxeth more haughty, and growes worse and worse, the more good he enjoys. A

A gracious soule upon the sight of the evill of sin in it selfe, is more deeply humbled before God, and with *S. Paul*, crieth out of his *wretchednesse*. A heavenly minded man being smitten for his wickednesse, laboureth for subjection under the hand of the Almighty, and saith, *I will patiently abide and endure thy correction, because thou Lord hast done it.* When the gracious man is held under the crosse, and suffereth bitter things, he saith, *It is good for me that I am afflicted, for thereby I am taught to know thee.* In all troubles that befall him, hee professeth that *it is good for*

for him to cleave unto God.
And the lesse outward
wealth he hath, the more
he seeks for inward grace,
making a holy use of all
things.

Vpon these instructions
hence delivered, let us
take a view of our selves,
and try whether we in
our afflictions are such as
cleave to God, and are
drawne neerer to him
thereby; call to mind the
crosses wherewith God
hath exercised thee, and
the blessings which at any
time he hath bestowed
upon thee, and see how in
both thou hast beene bet-
tered; see what profitable
use thou hast made there-
of for thy soules comfort.

Let

Let us see how we have followed the providence of God in his dealing with us: for if we have an interest in his goodnesse, then will wee bee carefull, as God turnes all things for our good, so to follow the same (together with him) for the good of our souls.

Now because things do not *alwayes* conduce to the good of Gods children, as outward *Peace* and *prosperity*, oftentimes make them worse; therefore some may object, how can this be true which here the *Apostle* saith, *That all things doe worke together for the best to them that love God?*

Object.

The answer hereunto
is

Ans.

I

Iob 3. 25.

is, that for the most part the children of God doe take the good of the blessings which God bestowes on them, and avoid the snares of evill which accompany the same; *Iob* saith, *The things I feared are come upon me.* By which we see, that *Iob* in the midst of his prosperity did feare, and was jealous over himselfe.

2

But a more plainer answer of the objection is, that if the good things of God, as *Peace*, *Plenty*, and *Prosperity*, doe fall out at the first to their ill, yet neverthelesse they shall prove in the end a great gaine unto them; for whereas by occasion of these

these, they formerly fell
(having too high an estimation of the creature,
and overprizing the same)
they see *now* more into
their nature, and learne to
contemne them.

Againe the outward
good things of this life
shew the weaknesse of
Gods servants, and serve
to try what is in them; and
therefore we read of *Hezekias*
that God left him,
to try what was in him, the
outward treasure which
he had was a meanes to
make knowne to himselfe
and others, the pride and
vanity of his minde; the
plenty & prosperity of the
Saints are greater triers of
them, than adversities and
wants.

3

2 Chron.
31.33.

wants. For many that have comfortably gone through a low condition, have yet foully failed in a full estate; their corruptions breaking forth to the view of others: prosperity teaches men themselves; it tries their spirits, and layes them open to the world. Therefore it seemeth good to God, to strip his servants of these outward things. They can acknowledge with patience his righteous dealing, knowing that mans happinesse consists not in abundance of these things, but that the blessing of God is riches enough.

Object.

But some may object
and

and say, I have beene long afflicted, and have had many crosses upon me, and little good doe I finde by them, I am never the better, but rather the worse for all. This may be true thou sayst, but stay a little, and consider the event; howsoever by reason of the bitternesse and continuance of the crosse, hitherto thou findest little good thereby: yet know that God is all this while but in hammering and working of thy unruly heart, thy good will follow afterwards. We see by experience that sick persons while they are in their physick, are made sicker and sicker, but after that

Answ.

Simile.

that hath done working,
then the party is far bet-
ter than before. It is a fol-
ly to think that we should
have physick and health
both at once: it is impossi-
ble that a man should sow
and reap both together.
We must of necessity en-
dure the working of Gods
Physick. If trouble bee
lengthned, lengthen thy
patience: when the sick
humour is carried away
and purged, then we shall
enjoy desired health. God
promiseth forgivenesse of
sinne, but thou findest the
burthen of it daily on
thee. Cheere up thy selfe,
when the morning is dark-
est then comes day: after
a fight, victory will ap-
peare.

peare. Gods time is best,
therefore wait cheere-
fully.

Oft times Gods servants
under his crosse are so sore
wrought upon, that they
have hardly leisure of ma-
king a good use of the
same, being distracted and
dejected for the present,
so as they burst out rather
into further evill than be-
fore. But afterwards when
their afflictions are tho-
rowly digested, then they
begin to finde the fruit of
patience, humiliation, and
obedience, and are better
for the same ever after:
therefore wait contented-
ly Gods leisure, thou shalt
surely finde a sweet calme
after the storme is over:
though

though we finde little benefit by afflictions for the present, yet let us not conclude all is naught with us; for tentations being bitter, will not suffer men in them to lift up their hearts strait: after the extremity & vexation thereof is laid, then *ensueth the quiet fruit of righteousness.*

Object.

i.

Ans.

But if all things (yea sin it selfe) shall turne to the best to those that love God, what need we then care for the committing of sinne? The Apostle S. Paul. was in his dayes troubled with the like question, therefore observe with what detestation he answers, saying, *God forbid,*

forbid, the damnation of such men is just. But to answer more fully and plainly for the satisfaction of weak Christians.

True it is, that all things, even the sinnes of Gods servants shall by Gods mercy turn to their good; yet never the lesse the rule of Gods Word must be ever regarded, which is this *we may not doe evill that good may come thereof.* That which is evill in it selfe must not be done; no, though for the doing thereof we might gaine the greatest good, or avoide the greatest evill whatsoever: as if it were to winne a World, wee might not tell a lye, because

2

Evils not
to be
done, that
good may
come
thereof.

Matth. 4. 4

cause it is a breach of Gods Law ; Christ saith to the Devill, *It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* Wee may not therefore by sinne tempt God, so to see his goodnesse in working good out of our wickednesse.

If therefore upon this ground of Doctrine (that all things shall turn to the good of Gods children, yea even their sins themselves) any of us shal commit wickednesse and displease his Majesty, to try what *mercy* and *wisdome* is in him, to draw good out of our evill ; this is a provoking of Gods goodnes, and those who thus doe, turne the truth of Gods Word

Word into poyson, and make even ~~that~~ their destruction, which should build them up in grace and holinesse.

If we sin through weakness and frailty of our flesh, and through strength of temptation, upon repentance we may find grace, but if presuming that *God* will turne all things to our good, we break his Law, what else do we but first of all make God the cause of our evill; and secondly, vex and scandall the Saints on earth: thirdly, we sad the blessed Angels in Heaven; and fourthly rejoyce the Devils and damned spirits in Hell; putting Darts and deadly weapons

Danger
of wilfull
sinning.

pons into their hands to work our ruine and overthrow : nay fifthly, wee grieve the good Spirit of God, who continually putteth us in minde of better things (if wee would hearken to him) and by whom wee are sealed up unto the day of redemption : sixthly, we slacken grace in our hearts, and whereas we should grow forward in vertue and holinesse, wee weaken the power of godlinesse exceedingly in us : seventhly, all willing sins do abate our affiance in God, and the feeling of his favour towards us : yea, often times by so sinning, many of his deere children have walked

walked heavily without
spirituall joy all the dayes
of their lives; for howso-
ever in regard the Lord
hath elected us, wee shall
never finally fall away and
perish, yet wee may want
the sweet sence of his fa-
vour, and remaine afflicted
in spirit all our life long.
And then wee shall know
that the griefe and trouble
which we here undergoe
to avoid sinne and subdue
it, will be nothing so much
as the mischief and sos-
row; That sin once com-
mitted and yeelded too,
will bring on the soule.

Note.

Yea, there is no child
of God, but by experience
shall one day feele, that
howsoever God by his

P

wise-

pons into their hands to work our ruine and overthrow : nay fifthly, wee grieve the good Spirit of God, who continually putteth us in minde of better things (if wee would hearken to him) and by whom wee are sealed up unto the day of redemption : sixthly, we slacken grace in our hearts, and whereas we should grow forward in vertue and holinesse, wee weaken the power of godlinesse exceedingly in us : seventhly, all willing sins do abate our affiance in God, and the feeling of his favour towards us : yea, often times by so sinning, many of his deere children have walked

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will bring on the soule.

Yea, there is no child
of God, but by experience
shall one day feele, that
howsoever God by his

P

wise-

Note.

wisedome and mercy, can turne every sinne to our good, yet it will prove bitter as Wormwood in the end, the pleasure will never answer the smart and vexation that attends it. The contrition and breaking of thy heart for thy sinnes committed (if thou be Gods) will more disquiet and trouble thee, than possibly it can bee a trouble to resist and forsake sinne.

Nay, oftentimes God doth punish the very want of reverence in his servants to him, as also their slacknesse and unfitness in good duties, so, as they may easily discern hee is offended with them for
the

the same. As we may see by the example of the *Corinthians*, who comming unpreparedly to the Lords Supper, *for this very cause* were so punished, *that some of them were sick, and some weake*, and some were struck by Death.

David's numbring of the people, & *Hezekias* shewing of his *treasures* to the Princes of *Babell*; howsoever, by some they may be thought small sinnes, yet God scourged them for the same very sharply; And it is good that Gods servants should a little know what it is to offend their Maker, for if they will bee so negligent and carelesse in walking with

him, it is fit they should reape the fruit of their owne devices. It causeth much relapsing, and back-sliding from God, when men have never truly smarted for their sinne. Having had knocks in our own wayes, it establissheth us in Gods wayes. For we love to wander from our selves, and bite strangers at home, till God by one crosse or other brings us to himselfe, and then wee think of returning to him. Nay, it is better for them a thousand fold, that God should so schoole them, then that they should be let alone, and so goe on without controulment from sin to sin till they
come

come to desperation.

Howsoever therefore that God can, and will turn the sinnes of his servants to their best advantage ; yet better it were for them they had never sinned at all , Doe wee not think that *David* wished hee had never fallen into that sin of *Adultery* ? And would not *Peter* have bin glad , that hee had never denied his Master ? The sin of *David* cost him many a cry for pardon , *Mercy Lord , mercy , against thee have I sinned , forgive mee this haynous crime.* And it cost *Peter* many a bitter salt teare too ; Howsoever both *David* and *Peter* after their recovery by re-

P 3 pentance,

pentance, were the better for it, to their dying day.

As for all such as persist in sinne, that God may turne all things to their best, Let them know that all things shall work together for their bane and utter destruction for ever, which I now come to shew.

1
God.

2
Creatures.

First of all God himselfe, and his blessed Angels, are at enmity with them: And therefore, 2 All the creatures both in heaven and earth are against them. In *Pharaohs* tenne *Plagues*, wee see the creatures were all readie to execute the pleasure of the Almighty against him. And the *Beares out of the*
For-

Forrest were armed by God to devour those scoffing children: This is one part of the burthen, under which the creatures of God do groane, that they serve God against wicked men, and are his Armies to punish the rebellious world.

3. Even the good gifts of God are turned to the bane of the wicked. *Ab-soloms* glory, his goodly long locks, were his halter to hang him up by: *Achitophels* wit and policie, brought him to that fearefull end, of being his own hangman. *Hamans* honor, what good did it to him, but only brought him to greater shame? his great-

3
Good
gifts.

nesse made him swell in pride, and his pride had a suddaine fall : What became of *Herods* high mind in taking to himfelfe the glory of God ? which when foolish people ascribed it to *him*, was hee not presently smitten, so as the *wormes consumed him*, and hee dyed a lothsome death ? What became of *Dives* his riches ? did not his abuse thereof plunge him deeper into hell ? Wicked men though they abound in this world, yet not being in covenant with God, they have nothing with a blessing. The wicked are but as traytors before God ; And oft it is seene, that great Traytors
who

who are by the Prince kept in prison, are nourished very liberally, untill their time of Execution come: So it is with all gracelesse persons, how ever for the present they have great allowances, yet as Traytors (in the conclusion) they shall have an hard account to make unto God for all those things they have sinfully enjoyed. And not only so, but they abuse the very truth of God, as shall appeare in divers particulars.

First, for the comfortable doctrine of justification by *faith* alone, they pervert the same to their owne destruction; saying,

P 5 wee

4
Truth of
God.

1
Justifica-
tion.

Wee are justified by faith only, what need wee then care for doing of good works? Alas, they profit us nothing to our salvation. Therefore it is to no end to strive to do good.

2
Christian
liberty.

Againe, for the Doctrine of *Christian liberty*, God having given us lawfull recreations, and plentiful use of his creatures, they turne all into licentiousnesse; and in stead of moderate refreshment, they make a daily occupation of sports and games; In stead of a lawfull use of the creatures, they runne into all excesse of ryot, in *meat, drink, apparell, build-ings, and delights.*

And for the Doctrine
of

of mortality, how do wicked men abuse it, saying, *Let us eat, drink, and bee merry, for to morrow wee shall die:* that which should put the in mind of spending of their time well, encreaseth their sin.

Whereas the long suffering of God should lead men to repentance; the wicked by means of Gods patience, runne more securely on in sinne; *treasuring up to themselves, wrath against the day of wrath, and the declaration of Gods just judgement,* which one day shall ceaze upon them. Because hee doth not speedily execute his displeasure, therefore they grow worse & worse.

Those

3

Mor ality.
1 Cor.

4

Gods patience.

Never considering the lamentable condition that sinne brings men into, which did they thoroughly weigh, they would give the whole world if they were possessours of it, to have their spirits at freedom from this bondage and feare. God will take a course, that his grace shall not bee turned into wantonnesse. First or last, thou shalt find (who ever thou art) at what rate thou buyest the pleasure of sin. Those that have enjoyed long the sweet of sinne, may expect the bitterest sorrow, and heart-breaking for it.

Nay, the greater good things they have, the greater

greater evill they receive thereby by abuse of the same; the more they are illuminated by the Word, their hearts become more rebellious against it; and the greater *authority*, *wealth*, and *health* they enjoy, the more mischief they do with them. Those heavenly Doctrines, which should build up a good heart unto holinesse, doe they abuse to bring their soules deeper into wickednesse; shewing themselves like to their Father the Devill, whose children they indeed are: God hath said, *Hee would give his Angels charge over thee*, which is a most comfortable place to a good heart:

5
The Word

heart : But how doth Satan abuse this to Christ; That he should fling himselfe headlong from the Pinnacle of the Temple; and as the Devill, so every wicked man by all instructions of the Word, takes occasion to tempt God the more; turning both *grace* it selfe, and the *Doctrine of Grace*, into wantonnesse.

Are there not many that heare the Word, and know Gods mind, who yet profit nothing to amendment of life? were it not better for these never to enjoy such meanes of heavenly wisdome, Than now having the light still to live in darknesse; their know-

knowledge onely makes their damnation the greater if they continue in sin; what a lamentable condition is that man in, whose knowledge is only sufficient to damne his owne soule? But let us see further how all evill things work together for the worst to ungodly persons.

Evill
things.

And to begin with spirituall ill things, as *Heresies* and *errors*, they serve but to ensnare the wicked; for instead of making them cautelous, and diligent to search out the truth, they are carried away with every wind of Doctrine.

I
Spirituall
ill things.

So for the ill of good
men

men their fals and sins, the wicked of the world reap no benefit there by, but incourage and hearten themselves the more in a sinfull way, rejoycing thereat, and making it their daily talke : neither doe their owne daily sinings any whit better them, but are as-so many punishments of their former transgressions : God in his justice suffering them still to runne on to the fulfilling of the measure of their iniquities.

2
Outward
evils and
crofles.

And for outward evils in this life, those that doe turn to a good mans happinesse, fall out continually to their destruction. *Pharaohs* tenne Plagues
(which

(which might have humbled his soule) made him but worse and worse: therefore saith God, *Why should I smite you any more?* for even since I punished you *ye revolted still.* The wicked are like to the Smiths Anvill, which by often beating is made harder and harder; so the more they are corrected, the stubborner and stiffer in sinne they grow. Their crosses are laid upon them from an angry God, and are forerunners of his eternall wrath, which shall seaze upon their soules in hell, where the more they are tormented, the more they shall blaspheme; and the more they shall blaspheme,

Causes

I

2

pheme, and the more they shall blaspheme, the more they shall be tormented without cessation.

The cause of all this evil upon the wicked is, first, *Gods infinite justice*, which will not be unsatisfied.

Secondly, their owne vile hearts, which like a sick man having an ill stomack, digests nothing, but turnes all to poyson. Therefore saith the Apostle, *To the unclean, all things are unclean*. As poyson some Plants put into a fertile place, doe inenome the ground whereinto they are removed. So the same crosses that turne unto a good mans welfare, prove a bad mans ruine by reason
of

of the corruption within him.

Another cause is, the Devils malicious working by it. He makes wicked men abuse all their parts, both *inward* and *outward* to Gods dishonour, and their own confusion, endeavouring to conforme them to himselfe. None hath greater knowledge and understanding in the Word of God than the Devill. Yet he turnes all his knowledge unto the sin against the Holy Ghost: but yet the Devill cannot force men to wickednesse; it is their owne sinfull hearts which betray them into his hands.

Whence

Vse.

I

Whence we learne that all wicked men in the midst of their happinesse are most unhappy, because they turne the sweetest blessings into bitter poyson; for all the gifts of God without his speciall gift of using them well, are turned into a curse. As *Balaam* had good parts, but they not being sanctified proved his bane.

Vse.

2

We see further, that outward prosperity is no mark of the true Church. Abundance of temporall blessings is no signe that we are in Gods favour: neither are learning and knowledge, evidences of spirituall grace: for the Devill hath greater understanding

standing and parts than any man: howbeit, sight of sin preserves us from falling into it: and such as shut their eyes against the light, plunge themselves into deeper the misery.

Now to proceed to further instructions: doe all things work together for the best to Gods servants; then hence we may learne the certainty of the salvation of Gods elect. I take my reason from the Text it selfe, after this manner. That which nothing can hinder, *that* is certaine, but the *salvation* of Gods children cannot be hindred, therefore the salvation of Gods children is most certaine.

If

Obser. I.
Salvation
certaine.

If any thing do or can hinder the Saints recovery or perseverance, it is sin: but to such as are united unto Christ by faith, sinne is so farre from hindring their happinesse, that by Gods over-ruling providence it turnes to their best good.

Obser. 2.
Gods particular providence to be observed.

The second thing which wee may ground here for the information of our judgement, is this, That as we know, the *providence of God* is the cause why all things work together for the best to his children: so wee should eye this very particular providence in all that we enjoy, turning the same to our good: there is a working

ing hand of God in every thing towards us, as wee may see in the examples of *Iob*, *Ioseph*, and *David*, with other of his servants, whose present sorrow and humiliation, was but a meanes of their future glory & exaltation. There is nothing so *bad*, but hee can draw *good* out of it when any evill is intended. God either puts barres and lets to the execution of it against us : or else limiteth and boundeth the same, both in regard of *time* and *measure*. The God of spirits hath an influence into the spirits of all men, & knowes how to take them off from doing us harme. All the
strength

strength of the creature, rests in the great Creator of all things, who if hee denies concurrence, the arme of their power soon withereth. It cannot but bring strong consolation to the soule, to know that in all variety of changes, and intercourse of good and bad things, our loving God hath a disposing hand. So as all *blessings* and *crosses* , all *ordinances* and *graces* , nay our very *fals* , yea, *Satan* himselfe, with all his instruments, being over-mastred & ruled by God, have this injunction upon them, to further Gods good intendment to us, and in no wise hurt us, which should
move

move us to see his disposing hand in all that befalls us. We owe God this respect, to observe his providence in the particular passages of our lives; considering hee is our *Soveraigne*, and his will is the *rule*, and we are to be accountable to him as our *Iudge*. We should question our hearts for questioning his care in the least kinde. So long as God sits at the Sterne and rules all, wee may bee sure no evill shall betyde us that hee can hinder.

Thirdly, hence we may learne, that there is not two, but *one* Soveraigne head over the whole
Q world,

Obfer. 3.

World, which is plainly proved by this Text of Scripture. For all things work together for the best to them that *love God*: and things which in themselves are contraries, agree together to procure *their* good; therefore all things whatsoever, are overruled by the sole power of the Almighty. The Devill himselfe although he be called the God of this World, yet he is at Christs beck, and could not enter into a few *Swine*, without leave first obtained: hee raiseth up hideous storms and tempests against the Saints, but perisheth himselfe in the waves at last; persecutions and perils may

may follow us, but they are all limited in the doing of hurt, which plainly demonstrates that there is but one main worker and wise disposer of all things.

Further, hence observe, that there is nothing in the world, that to Gods servants is absolutely evill; because nothing is so ill, but some good may be raised out of it, not as it is an evill, but as it is governed and mastred by a supreme cause. *Sinne* is of all evils the greatest, and yet sinfull actions may produce gracious effects, through Gods ordering and guiding the same.

Againe observe, that a childe of God is truly
Q 2 happy

Obſerv.

4

Obſerv.

5

2 Cor. 6.

happy in the midst of all misery. To prove this, I reason thus; In what estate soever the childe of God is, it shall turn to his good: therefore no affliction can make him truly miserable. The prooffe of this the Apostle sets downe in his owne example, *hee was poore, yet made many rich; he sorrowed, yet alwayes rejoyced; he had nothing, yet possessed all things; he was chastned, and yet not killed:* Gods children, although to the world they may seeme to be miserable, yet having communion and fellowship with him, they are alwayes happy: the very worst day of Gods childe, is better than the
 very

very best day of the wicked. The worst day of *S. Paul* was better to him, than the best day of *Nero* was to him; for the wicked, in the midst of their happinesse are accursed; whereas the godly, in the midst of their mileries are blessed.

This Doctrine is a ground of understanding divers other places of Scripture: as Psalme 91. The Lord promisetht that hee will *deliver his from the snare of the Hunter, and from the noisome pestilence:* and yet oft times his deere servants are in the hands of the wicked, and taken away by the stroke of his judgements: this truth

Q 3 never

A ground
of under-
standing
the pro-
mises.

neverthelesse remaining firme, *that all worketh together for their best.* So God teacheth us in his Word, that he doth make a league betweene his servants and the creatures; but all such expressions of his love we must bring to this Text, and then they are true, else they may seeme to bee false; *The plague shall not come neere thy dwelling place; but only so far forth as it is for thy benefit.* The good Prophet was torne in pieces by a *Lion*; and sundry holy men have received hurt by wilde Beasts, whose eternall welfare were furthered thereby. Therefore this phrase of Scripture
(*that*

(that the creatures are in league) is to bee understood, not that they have put off their hostile nature. But that they have the same issue, as those that are at peace with us.

Here likewise is a direction for us, how to pray for earthly blessings, and the removall of temporall judgements; often times worldly honours and riches are snares unto Gods children, and temporall chastisements (which wee so earnestly pray against) work much good unto us. And therefore it falleth out, that when wee pray against temporall calamities, wee pray against our owne good.

Q 4.

Being

A direction to pray for temporall blessings.

Being therfore afflicted, we should desire not absolutely that God would remove our troubles, but that hee would work his owne good pleasure upon us therby. Our prayers for temporall blessings, and removall of temporall crosses, must alwayes be conditionall; for what good will it bee for us to come out of the fire worse than we were, when wee went into it? If therefore God in his wisdome see it good for us to have affliction, we should not desire him absolutely to remove the same, till it have done us good; And then Lord deale with us as seemes best in thine own eyes.

As

As for such as affect neither God, nor goodnesse, let them know, that if all things work for the best to the Saints, then they may forbear their successeless endeavours, which they daily enterprize against them; in going about to hurt the godly, they doe them most good; for God will benefit them by their malice: Their wicked practises shall not only bee made frustrate, but dangerous to themselves; after the chastisement of his servants for their good, God will cast the rod into the fire. Men may know whether they are *vessells of mercy* or no, by the use they are

put to. The basest of people, are fit enough to be *executioners*. It is a miserable wisdom, when men are wise to work their owne ruine. Do not many spin a fine thred, and weave a faire web, when by their turnings and devices they turne themselves into hell? What ever wee get by sinne for the present, it will one day prove the heaviest businessse that ever wee undertook.

God is the onely *Monarch* of the world, and makes all *things* and *persons* whatsoever, serviceable to his owne end, and his Churches good. He is higher than the highest:
Sathan

Sathan with all his instruments, are but slaves to the Almighty, executioners of his will. Can we think that Gods children who are so neere & deare to him, shall alwayes bee trampled upon by the powers of darknesse. No certainly, hee is interess'd in all their quarells, and takes their injuries as don to himselfe. When wee can bee more subtile than the Devill, or more strong than God, wee may think to thrive against them. He is a *wall of fire* round about his Church, not only to defend and preserve it, but to consume all the Adversaries thereof; God doth great matters for his servants;

vants; hee rebukes Kings
and Princes, and ruinate
Empires for their sakes:
For the bringing home
back againe of the *Iewes*,
hee translated the *Babylonish*
Empire to the *Persians*;
and therefore the
wicked must take heed
of attempting any thing
against Gods Church; be-
cause the harme thereof
will redound upon their
owne heads. God delights
to take the oppressed par-
ties part, and serves him-
selfe of all his enemies for
his peoples good. They
practise against the righte-
ous, and he *laughes* them
to scorne. Wicked men
cannot do Gods children
a greater pleasure, than to
oppose

oppose them, for by this meanes they help exceedingly to advance them.

Sathan and all his instruments, what get they by their cruelty to the Saints? they doe but encrease their own torment, and doe them the more good? but this is both against their knowledge and *wills*. Therefore if they be loath to doe them any good, let them take heed how they attempt any evill against them.

And here let all such be admonished how they provoke Gods children to cry in their prayers against them: For it is better for the wicked, that they had all the creatures
in

Vse 1.

in heaven & earth against them, than the poore Saints; for a few of these wil more prejudice them, than all the world besides.

Come wee now to the grounds of practise hence to be observed.

Vse 2.

Againe, doth God order all *for the best*, to them that love him?

Let us not then except against any evill that shall befall us, for this our present crosse shall turne to our future comfort. It is the Saints happinesse, That their best is in working still, till they be compleat in heaven: But the wicked and men of the world, their worst is alwayes in contri-

contriving ; their life is bad, their death is worse, and after death it is worst of all with them. God himselfe, and all under him, work continually for the good of his children, their best is last, their light groweth on clearer and clearer *as the light, untill the noone day.* But the worldly grow worser and worser every moment: To them that feare God, sinne and sorrow, their very worst, is by Gods mercies best for them; whereas all the best of the wicked by abuse turnes to their worst.

Observe here the excellencie of the Saines comfort, above all other comforts

vse 3.

comforts whatsoever: The nature of it is this; It must be stronger than the grievance of which it is a cordiall: And the reason of spirituall comfort must be more forcible, than any carnall reason can bee to undermine it. Now what stronger consolation can a man have than to be assured, that all things (without exception) shall work together for his good; but this is not all. What a sweet refreshment is it, when the soule can say, God will either stop mee from falling into sin, outwardly by afflictions, or else subdue my corruptions inwardly by his Spirit, that I shall not bee overthrown.

thrown by them; hee will never suffer mee to rot in my finnes; but when I do fall, will raise me up again: It beares up a Christians heart, that rather than we shall continue in an evill way, God will send some *Nathan* or other to rouse us out of our security.

Therefore to all thy comforts adde this; That God will not onely save thee at last, but turne all things to the best whilest thou art here. This is the highest straine of consolation. It is farre stronger to refresh and quicken us, than any grievance can be to afflict us; It maketh evill things (in comparison) to seeme good, *As*
Moses

Moses counted the rebukes of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt ; he made more choice of affliction, than he did of the worlds glory. If God bee with us, who can be against us : If he be our Shepherd, we are sure to lack nothing. There is such a force of comfort in salvation, that we will rather choose outward evils, than to enjoy outward good things. Moses by faith seeing that outward affliction and shame were knit to salvation, chose these, and refused dignity and ease.

How ought this to stay the soule under all its heavie pressures ? Why should not I be patient in
sick-

sicknesse, in poverty, in disgraces, or why should I despaire at the houre of death? Am I not under the hand of my God, working my good out of every evill? It is the subtilty of our arch-enemie to drive us to a stand, that we may doubt of our conditions, and say with *Gideon*, If the Lord be with mee, and that I am his child, why is it thus with me? How is it that all this sorrow and misery hath befallen mee, and lieth so heavie upon my soule? But our comfort here, is, that God who turneth all things to our best, is stronger than Sathan.

Againe, considering all
things

things conduce unto our good, though in appearance never so opposite; this comfort ariseth, That if God doe so work this or that, then I must beleieve against beleife, I must stand firme against contraries; my faith must answer his manner of working, and beleieve that God can bring me to honour by shame, and to Heaven by Hell gates: for if it be his course of dealing, first to cast downe, and then to lift up, by disgrace to bring his servants to glory; then in all my extremities I must rest upon God, who is never neerer unto his to succour them, than when hee seemes to bee furthest

furthest off. When hee
meanes to give victory, he
suffer us to be foiled first;
and when hee intends to
justifie a poore sinner, he
will condemne him first.
Let us therefore hope a-
gainst hope, and desire
God in our distresses to
open our eyes, that wee
may see our consolations.

Hagar had a Well by
her when she was ready
to perish for thirst, and
yet she saw it not: and *Eli-
sha's* man had Angels to
defend him when the *Ara-
mites* compassed him a-
bout, but perceived not
the same: so the Angell of
the Lord continually pitch-
eth his tent about the god-
ly though they are not a-
ware

Psal. 34.

ware of it; yea, God is then neereſt to us when we are in moſt ſtraights. Cordials are kept for faintings. When Chriſt went to caſt the Devill out of a child, he then moſt raged and tare him: So likewise Satan and wicked men, moſt rage when they are neereſt to their end and deſtruction. In thy greateſt danger never reſt on thy friends, but on the Lord, who never ſtandeth neerer and firmer to us, than when we are moſt perplexed and know not what to doe. A diſtreſſed ſoule ſeeth oft no comfort in outward things, and therefore retireth unto God, in whom it findes
wha'ſoever

whatsoever may make it happy. *Our strength may faile, and our heart may faile,* but God is our portion for ever. When we are weake, then wee are strong; and when we are most cast downe in our selves, we are neere to Gods helping hand. This carriage of the Almighty ought to establish our faith.

Psal. 24.

In all cases of extremity we should have a double eye, one to look upon our grievances and troubles, and another to look upon the issue and event of them. Why do men in time of dangerous sickness take bitter Physick, which is almost death unto

Double
eye.

to them? Why doe they then undergo such things as they loath at other times? Is it not because they rest upon the skill of the Physitian? And shall we then in our distresses distrust God for our souls, when we will trust a weak and mortall man with our bodies? If conceit be so strong in earthly things, as indeed it is, then *faith* is much stronger, when it grounds it selfe upon the truth of the Word. When God exercises us with poverty, or other afflictions, this should teach us submission to his providence in any condition, saying, Lord do with me what thou wilt, only let
this

this poore soule be pretious in thine eyes. Thou hast promised, that howsoever these afflictions lie heavie upon me, yet in the end al shall turn to my good, therefore dispose of thy servant at thine owne pleasure, I resigne all to thee.

Here is the rejoycing of a Christian, which makes him cheerefully passe through any affliction; he knowes that good is intended in all that befalls him: with what alacrity did *Ioseph* say unto his brethren, *Ye sold me hither, but God hath turned it to the best, that I should preserve and nourish you all, and save much people alive,*

A Christians joy.

live, who otherwise were like to have perished with famine: This made *Iob* so patiently to say, *The Lord giveth & the Lord taketh, blessed be the name of the Lord.*

And contentment.

This is the ground of all true contentation, I have learned, (saith *S. Paul*) *in all estates to be content, to be rich, and to be poore, to abound, and to be in want,* and why so? Whatsoever his estate and condition was, God turned it to the best: shall any man dare to mislike of Gods allowance? Doth not hee know better what is good for us, than we can possibly imagine what is good for our selves?

This

This likewise should teach us not to take offence at the reproach and disgrace which is cast upon Gods children; for *mark the righteous*, (saith David) *and behold the upright, the end of that man is peace.* The issue of their trouble is ever quietnesse: take not one peece of a Christian mans life by it selfe, but take it altogether; and then thou shalt see the truth of this Doctrine. To see *Ioseph* in the Dungeon and in his irons, we haply may bee offended, and call Gods providence in question: but beholding him in his honour and advancement, we cannot but con-

live, who otherwise were like to have perished with famine: This made *Iob* so patiently to say, *The Lord giveth & the Lord taketh, blessed be the name of the Lord.*

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clude him a happy man. So if we look on *Iob* sitting with sores on the Dung-hill, there is matter of offence, but to see him restored againe, and blessed with a greater estate than he had before, this is matter of praising God. If we consider of Christ abased, & hanging upon a Crosse, so there will be scandall, but looke on him exalted to glory far above all Dignities and Powers, and then the scandall is soone taken away. Let us therefore lay one thing to another, when we eye Gods people, and we shall see a blessing under their greatest curse. Those things which are contrived by
mans

mans wit, may argue great folly, if one part be not annexed to the other; therefore looke to the whole work towards his servants, and then thou shalt never be offended at their condition.

This also is a ground of Christian *boldnesse* in holy courses, when a man is fully resolved, that come what will come, God will turne all to his good; it encourages him cheerfully to go through any difficulty: what is the reason of the fearefulnesse and dastardnesse of most men, but only this, that if wee doe this or that duty, or abstaine not from this or that good action; then

R 3 this

Vse. 5.

Holy
boldnesse.

Prov. 29.

this crosse and this displeasure by such and such a person will bee brought upon me. The Wise man saith, *That the feare of man bringeth a snare, but hee that trusteth in the Lord shall be exalted.* Let us not (regarding the feare of man) neglect our duty to God, for he can turne the hearts of the Kings on the Earth, to seek the welfare of his poorest creature, and make thy very enemies to be thy friends. He that for sinister ends will offend his Maker, may well be excluded to the gods whom they have served. Go to the Great men, whose persons you have obeyed for advantage.

tage; to your *riches*, to your *pleasures*, which you have loved more than *God* or goodnesse. You would not lose a base *custome*, a *superfluity* for me, therefore I will not owne you *now*. Such men are more impudent than the Devill himselfe, that will claime acquaintance with God at last, when they have carried themselves as his enemies all their dayes. God wants not means to maintaine his, without being beholding to the Devill. He hath all helpe hid in himselfe, and will then shew it, when it shall make most for his owne glory. He deserves not to live under the protection of a

R 4 King

King, that will displease him for feare of a Subject. The three Children in *Daniel* said, *Know O King, that our God can deliver us out of thy hands; but if he will not, yet neverthelesse we will not fall down and worship thine Image. The righteous are bold as a Lion* (saith the Wise man) *the Lord is his strong Tower.* What need we feare any creature, when wee have him on our side, who hath both Men and Devils at his beck?

Prov. 28.1

Use 6.

And if God turne all things whatsoever to our good, should not wee through the whole carriage of our lives, chiefly aime at his honour? *God writes.*

writes our names in his Book, he numbers our hairs, and bottles up our teares: he hath a speciall care of us, every good deed wee doe he writeth downe to eternity; yea, if we *give but a cup of cold water in his name,* he taketh notice of it: and shall not wee then take speciall occasion to magnifie him in all things? We pray daily, *Hallowed be thy name,* therefore ought accordingly to observe *Gods* dealing with us. How is it possible that we should give him the glory of his mercies, if we never observe them?

A wicked man considers, this makes for my advantage, and this for

R s my

my profit, this tends to my ease and wealth, &c. studying how to make friends, and please persons in place above him; not respecting Gods honour and glory in the least kind: whereas the sincere Christian looks on all things as they tend to his best happinesse, and therefore, fore-cast thus: If I do this or that good, then I shall grow in grace, & wisdom. and knowledge, but if I neglect it, and be carelesse of well doing, I shall hurt and wound my soule, and break the peace of my conscience: by this company and good acquaintance I shall be furthered in holinesse, become wiser and

and better in heavenly understanding; if I *fall*, they may raise me up, and helpe maintaine a gracious frame within me. Where true holinesse is, the soule is sensible of all advantages and disadvantages of good. An indifferency for any company or employment, shewes a dead heart.

This is a main difference to distinguish a childe of God from a prophane wretch that only lives to himselfe, his heart is taken up wholly with the world and matters below; whereas the godly are all for thriving in grace and increase of godlinesse. The wicked man considers of things as they serve to satisfie

else his lust; and if wee have better thoughts at any time, it is but for a start. But a godly mans aimes are alwayes holy, and the strength of his soul is put forth that way. He values himselfe as hee stands in relation to God and a better life; and esteemes all other things more or lesse, as they further or hinder his spiritual growth, and bring peace and sorrow at the last unto him.

2

Persons to
whom this
priviledge
belongs.

But I hasten to the second part of the Text, *The persons to whom this priviledge belongs*, that is, *to them that love God*. And why to them that love God? because the Apostle speaketh

speakeſh of afflictions; and wee know that the grace which is moſt converſant in the Saints ſufferings, is *patience*, which floweth from *love*.

Alſo, for that of all other graces is the firſt and ſweeteſt: it is the firſt, for whom wee love wee are ſorry to offend; and hate whatſoever is contrary to that we affect: we rejoyce in that we love, & grieve in the abſence thereof.

It is the commanding affection of all others, and ſetteth the whole man ſweetly a work to attaine its deſire. Love makes us forward and zealous Chriſtians; all the inward worſhip of God is in the affections.

Excellen-
cy of love.

ctions. As thou shalt *rejoyce* in no God but me, and *feare* no God but me. All the Commandements of *God* are brought by *Christ* to this *duty*.

3

Againe, *love* hath a speciall part in this priviledge, of bringing all things to work for our good. For when we love God, wee will make the best use of every thing which we suffer or do. If we love God and eye his glory therein. Love makes any burthen easie: it makes us studious of pleasing the party loved; as we say in the Proverb, *Love me, and doe with me what you will*. Love is full of inventions, it studies complacency

cencie, and sets the soule
a work to honour God in
all things.

In that the Apostle
saith, *To them that love
God, and not to the chil-
dren or servants of God.*
Wee may observe, *That
Christianity is not a bare
title, but it requireth some
qualification.* Therefore
the Scriptures when they
describe a Saint on earth,
doe not usually say *the
child of God*, but they
set him forth by some
holy affections or actions
wrought in him; As such
as *love God, or feare God,*
and *walke in his wayes.*
Hereby shewing that *Re-
ligion* is not a matter of
complement, but a reall
and

Christia-
nity, not a
bare title
only.

and holy endeavour to please the Lord; and although the Scriptures do name but some one particular affection, yet it is all one as if they had named all, for where one is in truth, there all followes.

Again, in that the *Apostle* here ascribes priviledges to those only that are thus qualified, wee must take heed in applying the promises of God, and these sweet consolations, that we be such persons to whom of right they doe belong; *for all things work for the best*, not to every one, but to such as *love God*: We must not therefore preach comfort to all, but must first labour to make

Comfort
not to be
preached
to all.

make men capable of it :
To this end.

1. First, wee will shew
the Nature of this
love.
2. Secondly, the exer-
cises of it, and dire-
ctions unto it.
3. Thirdly, some incite-
ments to this holy
affection.

The ground of Love is
a considering of God as
our owne God, in the co-
venant of Grace, and
an acknowledging of our
selves, to bee his *peculiar*
children in Christ Jesus :
when wee can say as the
Sponse in the *Canticles*, *I*
am my beloveds, and *my*
beloved is mine, this is
a loving of God; not as
the

Ground
of love.

the God of Nature only, but as *ours* peculiar by *Grace*. This union of *love*, which knits us to Christ, impleth another union by *faith* first; which is a cleaving to God as *my God*, and to Christ as *my Christ*, whence issues a second conjunction, or cleaving to him in love, as *my Saviour*, *my Husband*, and *my Head*.

To come to the *nature* of this Grace, and then to the working of it. The Nature of *Love* is scene in foure things:

1. In admiring of some secret good in the thing beloved, which stirres up the soule to make out for it.

2. In

2. In a studiousnesse of the contentation of the person beloved.
3. In a desire of union and fellowship with the person we affect.
4. In a resting, and solacing of our selves, in the thing wee love.

By these let us examine our selves whether we have the true love of God or no ; For it concerns us much to have this grace, it will distinguish us from all others, who feare him not :

First, our love to Christ commeth from the high esteem of the good things wee see in him : But how shall wee know whether that

Nature of
the love of
God.

I
Branch.

Triall
whether
we have
made a
right
choice.

that wee have this admiring of the good things we see in God, and in his *word* and *children*? Wee shal know it by our *choice*, and our choice followes our judgement: Would wee know whether our judgement be good? See what do we choose (especially), when things of the world and God come together. And here we want not examples to guide us: The question was, whether that *Moses* should still choose to live in *Pharaohs Court*, and bee accounted his sonne in law, or else depart, and suffer adversity with Gods children: Now *Moses* by sound judgement, had an high esteeme

esteeme of the excellencie and priviledges of the Saints, And therefore *chose rather* to endure afflictions, *than to enjoy the pleasures of sinne for a season.* Let us then see whether wee can be contented to part with our preferment, or pleasure for God or no. And whether we do esteeme the rebukes of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world; whether we can lay down our lives and liberties at Christs feet, and gladly want *all*, so we may enjoy him; If it be so with us, our estate is good.

Againe, let us see whether wee have a right prizing of the good things in God.

2
Triall.

Rom. 8.

God. Doe wee delight to speak much and often of Christ, and the benefits we receive by him? How was Saint Pauls heart enlarged, and his tongue full of heavenly eloquence, in setting forth the *unspeakable mercies of God*, which wee have by Christ Jesus our Lord? *If God be on our side, who can be against us*, (saith he) *What shall separate us from the love of Christ: Shall tribulation, shall anguish and affliction? I am perswaded that neither death, nor life, nor any other thing can doe it.*

3
Triall.

Another signe to know whether we have a secret admiration of the good things wee see in God, is
this,

this, If we doe undralue
all things else for Christ.
Worldly men are ever ad-
miring of the things be-
low, accounting such men
happy and blessed that
abound most therein:
Therefore there is nothing
that doth more truly try
a man than this: The soule
that sees a vanity in the
things beneath, and can
rejoyce in God only as his
true riches, is in a good
condition: Where there
is a true judgement of
God and Religion, the
soule of that man will ne-
ver stoop to the creature;
the soule so rejoyceth in
God, as that it will not
yeeld it selfe to any other.
Adam and Eve in their in-
nocencie,

nocencie, were both naked, and were not ashamed; one reason might be, because their thoughts were taken up with higher matters: In heaven we shall not bee ashamed, of things wee now are ashamed of. A Christian soule is so ravished with the enjoying of God, that it mindeth almost nothing but him.

2

Branch.
Desire to
please the
beloved.

The second branch in *love*, is a desire to doe all things, to the content of the *party beloved*; Our love to God will frame us to the obedience of his will: Obedience is the prooffe of love; *If ye love mee, saith Christ, keepe my commandements*: If wee
love

love God, wee will pray for the enlarging of his Kingdome; Where *love* is kindled in any heart, there is a care to bee approved of him whom we so love. This makes our obedience *generall*, to all Gods commandements, in all places and all things whatsoever. It makes us give our inwards to God, serving him with the soul and spirit.

Those therefore that nourish uncleane hearts within them, and think it enough to abstaine from the outward act of evill, love not the Lord sincerely. The Devill himselfe will doe outward things as readily as you, hee will

S con-

confesse *Christ* to bee the *Sonne of God*; and say, *Why art thou come to torment me before my time?* So that if thou dost outwardly only confesse God, what dost thou more than the Devill? In outward duties without sincerity there is no love; You will pray, the Devill will doe as much; The Devill hath a bad end in good actions: so there are many that come to Church, & make shew of Religion to cloke their evill courses. But such poore wretches, how ever they are pleased with shaddowes, are little better than Satan himselfe.

2

Againe, if wee be desirous

rous to content him who
wee love, then will wee
suffer any thing for his
sake; Therefore the Apo-
stles *went away rejoycing,*
and accounted it their glo-
ry, that they were esteemed
worthy to suffer hardship
for Christ: And David for
dancing before the Ark, be-
ing by Michal mockt, saith:
I wil yet be more vile for my
God. He cared not for any
reproach that could hap-
pen to him in a good way:
Yea, this will make us *zea-*
lous in his truth; hee that
hath no *zeale*, hath no
love; If our hearts rise not
when God is dishonou-
red, what *love* have we to
him? Is Gods glory and
the Churches welfare

True love
rejoyceth
in suffer-
ing.

deare to us ? it is a signe we love him : But can we see those things goe backward , and have no *zeale*, nor be any thing affected therewith, surely then we have no *love*.

3
Branch.

Love co-
vers union

Againe , if wee have a true love to God , then have we a desire of union and cōmunion with him ; we will be much in meditating of him, in speaking to him , and conferring with him. Those therefore that goe on from day to day , without private speeches with God, or solacing of their soules in him, what affection have they to him ? *Love* is communicative ; and what desire of communion can that

that soule have, that lives
a stranger to his Maker?
Can wee say we love one
with whom wee never
conferre, or speak to any
purpose.

Againe, if wee *love* a
man, we will advise with
him, especially in matters
of moment: so if wee *love*
God, wee will take coun-
sell of him in his *Word*, for
the guidance of our lives,
and stablishing our con-
sciences: If we advise not
with God, it is a signe that
we either think hee doth
not regard us, or else that
we count him not worthy
to be counselled by.

Another signe is, To
examine what *desire wee*
have to be dissolved, and to

S 3

be

2

It adviseth
with the
party lo-
ved.

3

And fits it
selfe for
his ap-
pearing.

be with Christ : Doe wee love his appearing to judgement ? and are wee now fit for his comming ? surely then it is a plaine signe, that our love is fixed and set upon him: So much as wee doe faile of this desire, so much wee faile in love to Christ: What was the reason that the people under the Law , were so much afraid at the appearing of an Angell unto them ? was it not this, that they were not fitted and prepared for God ? A man may bee a good Christian , and yet not at all times willing to die : for as eyes that are sore, cannot alwayes endure the light ; so a soule galled with

with sinne desires not to heare of the day of judgement, yet ought wee to thirst after it.

Another signe of this grace, is our eager and hungry desire after God, when with *David* we can say, *Oh God my heart panteth after thee, as the Hart panteth after the Brookes of waters.* When a soule is never at rest til he injoyes his Maker, but cryes out still, *Oh when shall I appeare in his presence,* it is a good signe.

The last branch or property is a resting and quieting our selves in the love of God above all things whatsoever, saying with *David,* *Whom have I in*

And hun-
gers after
God.

Psal. 42.

4 Branch,

Pfal. 77.

Pfal. 4.

Heaven or in earth besides thee, or what doe I esteeme in comparison of thee; let me enjoy but the light of thy countenance, and it suffices me: demand therefore of thine owne heart, what the things are that trouble thee most? and what is the cause of thy sorrow and disquietments, whether it be for losses or crosses outwardly, or for want of Gods love and the sense and feeling of his favour inwardly. They which grieve chiefly for outward evils, are most carried in their affections that wayes: but if in the confluence of all worldly blessings, wee can grieve for our spirituall wants, it is

is a comfortable evidence. When a man reckons not his happinesse to stand in the possession of the creature, but in the fruition of the Creator, and desires his favour above any thing, it is a gracious signe.

David had an abundance, yea, he had a Kingdome, yet nothing would satisfie him but the mercies of God. And when hee was in want, what course did he take, but *still comforted himselfe in the Lord his God*. That which a man sorroweth most for when he wanteth it, that he rejoyceth most in when he hath it: can we in our crosses rejoyce that God is ours? This is an

Psalm.

S 5 excel-

excellent signe, and plainly discovers, that we place our contentation more in him than in any thing else: can we delight more in the solace of his favour, than in outward prosperity? it is a heavenly testimony of a renewed condition. When *David* was in his greatest distresses; what desires had he then most in him? why, hee longed after the House of God: when the people were ready to stone him, wherein did he *trust*, but in the Lord his strong Tower?

In the last place would we know whether we can rest in God or no. Let us examine our selves then what

what endeavours we have every day to cleanse our soules from sinne; that so God may take pleasure in us, and we againe may delight in him? Let us see how we reſtraine our affections from running riot after the World and ſinful pleasures. And how we ſet our joy upon God, and frame our ſelves to do his will; I beſeech you let us deale faithfully with our owne ſoules in this particular. And if we find that our hearts tell us, (as *Peters* told him) *Lord thou knoweſt that I love thee*, I deſire ô Lord to pleaſe thee above all things, I have ſet mine heart upon thee, and I joy in thee and
in

2

3

4

in thy love, more than in all things else in the world. If thus I say we can in the integrity of our spirits appeale to God, who only knowes and searches our wayes, and say, *truly Lord thou knowest that I love thee*; it is a certaine and infallible signe unto us that we are his, and all things shall work for the best unto us.

But take we heed how wee deceive our selves in these things; by love we are Christians, therefore labour for sincerity of affection. A Reprobate or a Castaway may go far in these four signes of love. He may admire and wonder at the good things

things of God, but he doth it not from any thing *with-
in him*, but from the out-
ward beholding of them;
he can admire and talk of
them, but yet such men
are without any relish or
sweet taste of the thing
they speak of. So like-
wise an Hypocrite may
desire to please God in
many things, but not in all
things: as we see in *Herod*,
he heard *Iohn Baptist* wil-
lingly, and obeyed in *some*
things, but not in *all*; he
could not be crossed in
his beloved sinne which
abode in him, that must
not bee touched. Then
farwell God, and farwell
Christ and all.

So a Castaway may de-
fire

fire to be in Heaven, as being a place good for him: and hee may have some little *taste of those joyes above*, as is mentioned in the *Hebrewes*: but hee hath no relish of them from the love of God, but only from the love of himselfe. And his desire is not such as will draw him on to the use of means for spiritual growth and progresse thereunto: as we see in *Balaam*, hee had a desire *to die the death of the righteous*, but this could not make him leave his covetous disposition, and find a contentment in God alone.

A Reprobate may bee content with religion and
with

with Gods wayes, so long as peace doth accompany the same, (as now in this our Countrey, Christ commeth amongst us with plenty and prosperity, therefore Christ is a good Christ) but if the Gospell and Religion should bee professed with persecuti- on, and danger, and disgrace, it would soone appeare where mens contentments were. There is a resting not in the truth, because it is truth, but in regard of the good things which follow it. If we desire to approve our selves to God, let us examine our selves about this affection and every branch of it. The deceit is both
common

common and deadly ; and the profession of Religion in many Christians is not for Religion it selfe, but for by ends and sinister respects. To which end consider further these particulars.

Where there is true *love*, there will bee a desire of *union* to the beloved object ; so where the love of God is, there will be a desire of the accomplishment of the marriage betweene God and the soule. *He that loves a Harlot*, saith the wise man, *is one with her* : so he that affects the Lord, desires to be one with him ; therefore men have their names from what they
love ;

love ; if they love the world, they are called *worldlings* ; if they love Christ, they are called *Christians* ; how canst thou say that thou lovest the Lord, and doest not desire his presence in his Ordinances ? Can we say wee love such a man when we care not for his company ? God observes not so much what we do, as from what affection our duties proceed.

Againe, if we *love*, there will bee a desire to give content to the party beloved ; this appeares even in carnall selfe-love : for take a man that loves himselfe, he makes himselfe his utmost aime and end in all

Pfal. 18.

Pfal. 71.

all his actions: but when once God hath plucked this fleshly love out of our soules, then our affections will be carried to Christ only: this made the Prophet *David* say, *I love the Lord deerly, He is my rock, my fortresse, my deliverer:* a Christian hath his contentment in God alone; he findes an all-sufficiency in the Almighty, and therefore makes him his resting place. In all his trouble he will make God his deliverer, and finde more true comfort in him, than in all the things of the world besides: therefore if God should take all other things from us, yet if hee leave us Himselfe, a Christian

ftian is well contented because he knowes his best being is in God.

But how shall I know whether I doe esteeme rightly of God or no? *Quest.*

If we highly esteeme any thing, whether it be of this or a better life, we will be often speaking of them; it is a signe men undervalue heavenly truths when they discourse little about them; they much set light by God that have him not in all their thoughts. *Answ.*

Againe, what we esteeme of, we will choose above other things: it appears we have a pretious esteem of God when we choose him, and him alone for our

Pfal. 16.

our portion ; as *David* when he said, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in his courts for ever* : where God is truly loved, there will be a fall of all earthly things in that mans estimation : so he may gaine Christ, he counts all else but drosse and dung.

Lastly, if thou lovest God, thou wilt be afraid to offend him, and carefull to please him in all things : God delights not in a proud and haughty spirit ; but in an humble and meek soule ; these then should be thy delight. God is wonderfull well pleased with *faith*, for it is that which bindes him to performe

performe his promise,
therefore seek it earnest-
ly: whatsoever God ap-
proves, a Christian should
take pleasure in: every
grace is an ornament to a
Christian, and God de-
lights to see his owne gra-
ces in us. *Isaac* before hee
took *Rebecka* to wife, sent
her Jewels to adorne her;
so Christ sends rich Jewels
to his children, even the
graces of his *Holy Spirit*,
to make us love him, and
fit us the more for him.
Those that live in sinnes
against conscience, think
we that these love God?
No certainly; if they did
they would love that
which he loves, and hate
that which he hates: what

a pittifull thing is it to see men glorying in that which is *their shame*, in swearing and prophane-nesse, and yet for all this say they love God. Is it possible that the love of God and the love of sinne shold ever stand together?

2

Proceed wee now to some reasons and directions, for the attaining of this *grace*.

Directions
unto love.

And first let us not rest in an inferiour degree of this affection, but rise up therein, and labour that it may have full assent. There are degrees of assent, as when we love God because we love our selves: a naturall man may doe so, but this is not enough, for if wee
love

love God for our selves,
we make our selves our
God. Where the heart is
truly set upon God, it de-
lights in him only for
himselfe, and takes com-
fort in no condition fur-
ther than he sees God in
it. He never affected Christ
in truth, that is more taken
with the benefits and
priviledges that come by
him, than with the excel-
lency of his person. What
friend will bee content,
that a man should only
love him because he doth
him good? We must love
our selves and all other
things in and for God.
Moses and *Paul* rejoyced
to honour the Lord,
though themselves were
accursed

accursed and deprived of happineſſe ; and if wee could ſo love Chriſt , as not to deſire heaven it ſelfe if Chriſt were not there. This were truly to affect him : for indeed if Chriſt were not there, heaven ſhould not be heaven unto us. Wee muſt love our happineſſe , no further than we can have with it Gods good leave and liking.

2
Direction.

Againe, we ſhall know our love to God whether it be ſincere or no, by our abſtaining from ſinne ; If wee avoid evill for feare of puniſhment, or hope of reward only , our love is unſound , but when we ſo love God that wee will
not

not doe any thing contrary to his spirit: it is a speciall signe. Such a man if there were no hell to punish him, nor place of blisse to receive him, yet would not breake with God upon any termes.

For the meanes to attaine this love, we must in the first place labour for an humble & empty soule; *Blessed are the poore in Spirit* (saith Christ) for such only apprehend their misery without Christ, and their need of him; which occasions an holy rejoycing in the Lord, and unfained love to him; What is the reason that some are so ravished with the favours of the Almighty?

T

Is

Meanes
to attaine
the love
of God.

I

Is it not for that they were so formerly stung with the sight and feeling of their sinnes ? the more loving Christian ever the more humble Christian. Mark it when you will, and you shall find this disposition manifest in every true convert, they are daily humbling themselves for the least offence.

2

A second direction is to *tast* of the love of God in Christ. When the beams of his favour once shine into our hearts, we cannot but reflect upon him again; *We love him* (saith the Apostle) *because he loved us first*; *Mary* therefore *loved much*, because she

hee had experience of Gods love, *in forgiving her many finnes*: When a broken humble soule truly savoureth the goodnesse of the Lord, it cannot but be enflamed with desire after him: A Christian after hee hath had a taste of the love of God, hath another manner of judgement of justification than before. *Taste and see (saith David) how good and gracious the Lord is.* A man that relishes the sweetnesse of a thing, can better judge of it than hee which never tasted it.

Psal. 34.

A third direction is, to see what motives and reasons wee have from the love of God in Christ, to

3

exercise our understanding this way. Wee know *beat* commeth from *light*; and there is a sympathie betweene the braine and the heart; the braine must make a report to the heart, before that can be enflamed with affection; therefore seriously search into the grounds of thy affection.

I
Grounds
of our
love to
God.

The first ground is goodnesse in God, God is goodnesse it self; in whom all good is involved: if therefore wee love other things for the goodnesse which wee see in them, Why doe wee not love God in whom is all goodnesse? All other things are but sparks of that fire,
and

and drops of that Sea; seeft thou any good in the creature, remember there is much more in the Creator : leave therefore the ftreames, and goe to the well-head of comfort.

Another reason of love, is our affinity with God, our *Father* and *friend*, who is unto us in all degrees of neerenesse, both our *head* and our *husband*; were not the *Sonne* ours, what fellowship could we have with the Father : having fuch a *Mediator* with God, that is *bone of our bone*, and *flesh of our flesh*, why should we feare to go unto him ? He hath taken upon him these comfort-

able relations of *Shepherd* and *Brother*, to possesse us of his acquaintance with our infirmities, and readinesse to relieue us. For shall others by his grace fulfill what hee calls them unto, and not he that (out of his love) hath taken upon him these relations, so throughly founded upon his Fathers assignment, and his owne voluntary undertaking? How doth the tender Mother sympathize in the anguish of her child, notwithstanding all its froward averfenesse; and shall we think there is more bowells in our selves than in God? can there be more sweetnesse in the streame, than in the spring?

spring? If the *well* of consolation be alwayes open, and the *fountaine* of living water, bee never shut up, let us teach our hearts to suck and draw comfort from these rivers of refreshing: What a shame is it, that men should hunger at such a feast?

Consider likewise the benefits which wee have bestowed upon us, and the end why God vouchsafes us so much favour,

Benefits win love even from bruite creatures; therefore wee are worse than beasts, if we love not God for his benefits; *The Oxe knowes his owner, and the Asse his Masters Crib;* what are wee indeed but

an heap of Gods benefits? All our faculties of soule and body are the blessings of God; Whatsoever wee have or hope to have, is from him. Our breath, life, and being, subsists in *God*, who hath promised, that *heaven and earth, men and Devils, crosses and blessings, sinne and death*, all shall be turned by his over-ruling power to our good.

Consider what now we are, & what a happy condition God hath made us capable of hereafter; Is it a small matter that wee should be regarded above the Angels that fell? And that he who knew no sin, should be made sinne for us? nay, become a curse
to

to free us from the curse?
It was strange that the
three Children being cast
into the hot fiery Fur-
nace, should not burne.
So likewise it is a wonder
that Christians being in
the midst of the flame of
Gods love, should be so
cold and dead hearted: it
is not only the guilt of sin
that we are freed from,
but the unsupportable
vengeance of the Almight-
ty due for the same: and
is this a small matter?

If we regard the man-
ner of bestowing his be-
nefits, it will much ad-
vance Gods goodnesse to-
wards us, and raise up our
spirits to love him againe.
Doth not he love us first

T s of

of all? and prevent us with his favours? Is not his love *full* and overflowing? so as he never leaves us untill he make an end: where he freeth a man from danger he setteth him in a good estate, never ceasing till he possesse him of glory; as it is *2 Tim. 4. The Lord hath freed me out of the mouth of the Lion, and hee will preserve me to his everlasting kingdome.* He delivers us from spirituall evill, and gives us spirituall good. The meditation of these things will warme our hearts.

The next meanes is to joyne *feare* with our love to God: whom we love throughly

throughly, we will do nothing that shall displease. The feare of God whom we love, will cause us to make conscience of the least sinne against him; for there is no sinne be it never so little, but it will weaken our affection to goodnesse. When we venture upon any thing against conscience, is there not a decay of our love to God? and of our sense of his favour towards us: surely sin is the only makebate in our soules, and weakner of all our comforts. Those therefore are the lovingest soules towards God, that are most conscientious in their wayes. Carelesse
Christians

Christians have not that feeling of Gods love, which humble fruitfull Christians have: neither doe they live or die with that comfort as these do.

We are the *Sponse* of Christ, and he is jealous of our love. Our betrothed Husband cannot abide that we should set our affections upon strangers. Take heed therefore of adulterous and false affections; the more we love earthly things the lesse we shall esteeme of heavenly; and as our affection towards the creature increaseth, so our heat towards Christ abateth.

6

The next direction to stir up our love unto God is,

is, to exercise the same daily. For true love is not an abstractive affection, but an affection in practise, and we know every thing doth increase by exercise: exercise it therefore in fighting against the love of the world, and all selfe love; for as there are contrary commands, so there are contrary desires in a Christian: as there is the old man and the new man, the flesh and the Spirit, so there are contrary affections, one setting it selfe against another in him.

When we see a poore Christian, the *love of God* will say unto us, now shew thy love unto Christ in succouring one of his members.

members. No faith *fl* *sh*
and *blood*, charity begins
at home, thou mayst want
thy selfe another day.

In doing good likewise
wee should say, here is
now an occasion offered
me of honouring God,
and I will imbrace it. Oh
but faith *selfe-love*, there is
time enough hereafter;
hereby you may run into
poverty and disgrace, be
not too forward. There-
fore there must be a per-
petuall deniall of our selvs
against our whole thwart
nature. Those that are
Christians know experi-
mentally what belongs to
these things: but take a
carnall man or woman,
and they are led altoge-
ther

ther by their sensuall lusts
as bruit Beasts: whatso-
ever ease and selfe-love
wils, that swayes their
hearts any wayes. And in-
deed the most sincere
Christian hath the moti-
ons of these carnall and
worldly respects, but his
love unto God constrains
him to deny all, and listen
to what Christ whispereth
in his heart.

Consider wee a little
what may stirre us up to
exercise our selves herein.
Love it is the light of our
life; love we must some-
thing, and he lives not that
loves not: seeing then we
cannot but love, and that
the misplacing of our af-
fectiō is the cause of all sin
and

Motives
to stir up
exercise in
the love
of God.

and misery; what can we doe better than attend to directions, how to love as we should?

To come therefore to the foure things before mentioned being the branches of love. First, *We must admire God above all things.* And can wee admire any thing with wisdome but God alone? It is commonly said, that wee cannot be wise and love together, for that this affection is blinde, except it be in God. Againe, is there any thing more comfortable then that we give content to God? Is any service comparable to the service of a Prince? We must serve the Lord only.

only, and others in and for him, or else all we do is naught. All other services are bondage, this a perfect freedome. Againe, is there any thing more worthy our soules, than to be united to God? Can we have a greater happinesse than to be made one with Christ? By loving a thing we come to be like to it. Is there any thing that may or ought to challenge our love but Christ? Is it not a base thing to unite our soules (which are the best things under Heaven) to earthly contentments, than which we shall one day find nothing to be worse? The love of *God* planted in our hearts, maketh

maketh Christ and us one. As a Pearle in a Ring makes the Ring more pretious and valnable; so the soule united unto Christ, commeth to bee more gracious and heavenly. The more excellent the soule is, the more loving it will be to God. The holiest Saints have ever burned with most affection to Christ, as *Moses* and *Paul*. Can any thing satisfie us more than *God*? Know wee not that all things here shall perish? Therefore when wee place our love and joy in the world, do we not lose them too? We shall leave behinde us the things of this life, our sins only we carry

carry away, which cleave fast unto us, and staine our consciences world without end: what might more content us than the love of God, which wil endure for ever, and accompany us to Heaven when all other loves perish?

Consider that every thing thou dost without love, is dead and empty; *love* is the life of all actions; as we say of a gift, the *love of the giver*, is better than the gift it selfe; not only our performance is nothing without love, but we our selves are nothing without it; every acceptable service we doe must proceed from this heavenly flame; *Though wee*
speak

Speak with the tongues of men and Angels, and have not love, we are like to a sounding brasse and tinckling Symball. Have wee not much to do and suffer in this life? and what is it that makes us constant in duty, & carries us through so many oppositions as we meet withall, is it not love? doth not love sweeten our hearts, and take away every difficulty in our way to Heaven. Whilest we live here, we must of necessity suffer ill things, and go on in well doing; neither of which can be performed without love; this rules our whole lives. Beg therefore of God to quicken thee

thee in all cheerefull and
willing obedience : pray
that the Sunne of righte-
ousnesse would enlighten
thy heart : wee cannot
serve God without God,
nor have any holy af-
fection, except by his
Spirit he work the
same in us.

F I N I S.

Handwritten text, possibly a list or notes, including the words "L. 1" and "L. 2" visible in the lower left section.

